VAIṢṆAVISM IN BENGAL

Dr. RAMAKANTA CHAKRAVARTI

Based on careful and extensive research, this book is devoted to a critical review of the socio-historical context and consequences of Vaisnavism in Bengal from 1486 to 1900. It provides a new model of Vaisnava historiography which is quite different from the traditional theological exegeses. The main theme of this book is the correlation of Vaisnavism to social and intellectual developments in Bengal over a long stretch of time. It contains studies of the Vaisnava centres, the compulsions behind the homogenisation of Gaudiya Vaisnava theology, the socio-religious background of Vaisnava heterodoxy and guru - worship, and the factors which strengthened syncretism in religion and social relations. These subjects have been studied from the historical point of view with the help of massive evidence. The concluding chapters deal with Vaisnava adjustment with modernity, the discovery and evaluations of Vaisnavism made by the Bengali elite during the nineteenth century, and the permanence of the Vaisnava leaven in Bengali musical and dramatic forms. The bibliography given in this book is comprehensive. The historiographical model given here is expected to be conducive to further investigations.

Born in 1932, the author has written and published several important books on socio-historical developments in Bengal. He was awarded the D. Litt degree in History by the University of Calcutta in 1982. He is at present a Reader in History in the University of Burdwan. He is now studying the social and religious developments in Bengal in 1700-1800.

VAIṢṆAVISM IN BENGAL
1486-1900

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MY PARENTS

Professor Syamacharan Chakravarti

Srimati Jaladasundari Devi

PREFACE

THIS book is an abridged version of a doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Calcutta in 1980.

Although numerous books have been written by a host of scholars on the theological and literary aspects of Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal, yet several lacunae are discernible in Vaiṣṇava historiography. The socio-historical context and consequences of the Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* movement in Bengal were seldom studied in depth. The historical geography of the orthodox and heterodox Vaiṣṇava orders has been ignored by the professional historians. Almost nothing has so far been written on the reasons behind the popularity of *guru*-worship and its effects. The evaluations of the Vaiṣṇava heritage, made by the Bengali intellectuals and social leaders during the nineteenth century, are seldom reviewed in the works on the so-called 'Bengali Renaissance'.

In this book I have made an attempt at removing some of these lacunae. Much remains to be done in this regard.

The Caitanya movement originated in a rift in the contemporary Brahmanical society, which had been caused by the natural divergence between conservatism and liberalism. Caitanya and his supporters had no evident bias against the Muslims. Unfortunately certain obscurantist writers still propagate the myth that Caitanya's *bhakti* movement was a sort of delayed reaction to Muhammadan rule and religion. These points have been discussed in the first two chapters. I have tried to show in Chapter IV that the doctrine of *bhakti* had certain social implications which should be separated from the mysticism innate in it. Nityānanda's propagation of *dāsyabhāva* or *sakhyabhāva,* and the indifference of Vṛndāvana Dāsa, author of *Śrīcaitanyabhāgavata,* to 'erotic' *bhakti* are very significant. I have come to the conclusion that eroticism, illogically coupled with an extreme form of asceticism, was infused into the simple ideology of the Caitanya movement by certain powerful persons and groups. I have sought to understand their motives and trace their activities in Chapters VII, VIII, XI, XII, and XIV.

I have made an attempt at tracing the evolution of notable Vaiṣṇava organisations and centres in Bengal. I wanted to understand the different Vaiṣṇava viewpoints and, of course, the motives of persons who disseminated them. I, therefore, avoided the controversies regarding the 'authenticity' of various Vaiṣṇava biographies and other works, in each of which a particular viewpoint is manifest. I have not ignored lore and legend. They gave me some insight into backgrounds and characters. I have always felt that, in the absence of unimpeachable documentary or archival evidence, the historians should not belittle the importance of literary evidence while tracing the course of socio-religious developments in mediaeval times. There are more things in heaven and earth than are found in the archives.

The growing strength of religious syncretism necessitated a ritualistic synthesis in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. I have reviewed it in Chapter XVIII. The next chapter is devoted to a study of the effects of the caste-system on Vaiṣṇava developments. In Chapter XX I have sought to present a case-study of the Kartābhajā sect. It is based upon an analysis of more than six hundred enigmatic lyrics. The three concluding chapters deal with Vaiṣṇava adjustment with modernity, evaluations of the Vaiṣṇava heritage made during the nineteenth century, and the Vaiṣṇava leaven discernible in the media of entertainment.

I should add that I have never purposely tried to glorify or debunk any individual or group. The sources of the evidence used in this book are mentioned in the unavoidable foot-notes. I have also tried to follow the standard system of transliteration. The reader may, however, find in this book some typographical errors and other blemishes for which I crave their indulgence.

It is now my pleasant duty to acknowledge my debts. Though I was not a pupil of Professor Sukumar Sen, I consider him my teacher. It is from his interesting and scholarly books and essays, which I have been reading since 1950, that I have learnt much about Bengali literature and religious traditions.

I pay my obeisance to the memory of Haridāsa Dāsa, Vaiṣṇava savant, who edited and published numerous Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava texts and a Vaiṣṇava encyclopaedia, which were of immense help to me.

Dr. Buddhadeva Bhattacharya, Surendranath Banerji Professor of Political Science in the University of Calcutta, gave me useful advice and freely of his time. Dr. Ramaranjan Mukherji, Vice-Chancellor, Rabindrabharati University, and my esteemed colleagues in the Department of History, University of Burdwan, showed a keen interest in the progress of my work. I tender my grateful thanks to them.

Sri Syamapada Bhattacharya, my publisher, has shown considerable initiative in publishing this work. Sri Siddhesvar Roy assiduously maintained liaison with the three different presses in which this book was printed over a long stretch of time. Sri Debesh Chandra Datta of the Arunima Printing Works and his assistants printed several parts of the book with commendable celerity. To them I express my sincere thanks.

Srimati Chhabi Chakravarti, my wife, protected me from all sorts of distractions and helped me prepare the Bibliography and the Index. I am grateful for the help she has given me.

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Dated 19th October, 1985

Ramakanta Chakrabarty

ABBREVIATIONS

ASB	Asiatic Society of Bengal
B.E.	Bengali Era
BR	*Bhaktiratnāvalī*
BSNS	*Bhaktisūtras of Nārada and Śāṇḍilyasūtra*
BSPP	*Bangīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*
CBH	*Caitanyabhāgavata of Vṛndāvana Dāsa*
CBI	*Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*
CCM	*Caitanyacaritāmṛta* (Kālnā ed. & Sāhitya Akademi ed.)
GGD	*Gauragaṇoddeśadīpikā*
GVA	*Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna II*
GVJ	*Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*
JASB	*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*
JBORS	*Journals of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*
KDI	*Kartābhajā Dharmamat O Itihās*
KVS	*Kavīndravacanasamuccaya*
MV	*Muralīvilāsa*
ODBL	*Origin and Development of the Bengali Language*
PKT	*Padakalpataru*
RM	*Rasikamangala*
SKM	*Saduktikarṇāmṛta*
SP	*Śārṇgadharapaddhati*
SRK	*Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*
SV	*Subhāṣitāvalī*
VS	*Vaṃśīśikṣā*
VV	*Vaiṣṇavavandanā*

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CHAPTER I

EARLY MEDIAEVAL AND MEDIAEVAL BACKGROUND

I

Scholars have tried to measure the extent and the depth of Vaiṣṇava worship in ancient and early mediaeval Bengal. Their task was indeed a difficult one. Epigraphic evidence is subject to different readings and interpretations. The rituals of Vaiṣṇava worship are not stated in them. The exact identification of some of the Vaiṣṇava deities and images is also a difficult problem.[1] But various aspects of Vaiṣṇava worship are yet discernible in the epigraphic and iconographic evidence.

From the fourth century A.D. to the end of the thirteenth century Vaiṣṇavism as a Brahmanical faith co-existed in Bengal with Buddhism, Jainism and Śaiva-Śākta worship. Vaiṣṇavism was an amorphous creed with a tendency towards heterogenity.

Since far more inscriptions with Vaiṣṇava references and also Vaiṣṇava images have been found in North and East Bengal than in West Bengal, it may be said that Vaiṣṇavism was perhaps more popular in North and East Bengal than in West Bengal. Gayā in South Bihār was a notable centre of *Avatāra* worship.[2] From the mention of *Himavaccikhara* in the Dāmodarpur Copper Plate[3] of A.D. 543 it may be assumed that Viṣṇu worship was popular even in the sub-Himalayan regions of Bengal.

The inscriptions make it clear that Vaiṣṇavism or Viṣṇu-worship was patronised by kings, merchants, scholars, professional men and agriculturists: (Ribhu Gupta, President of the guild

1. *The History of Bengal*: Hindu Period ed. R.C. Majumdar, pp. 400, 401-404.
2. S. Mukherji, *A Study of Vaiṣṇavism in Ancient and Mediaeval Bengal*, pp. 41-42. The Gayā inscriptions on the *Avatāra* concept are the Kṛṣṇadvārikā Temple Inscription, Śitalā Temple Inscription, Nṛsiṃha Temple Inscription, and Rāmagayā Daśāvatāra Temple Inscription.
3. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, ed. R.R. Mukherji and S. Maiti, p. 71.

of merchants, mentioned in the Copper Plate Inscription of Dāmodarpur: A.D. 476-495; Gaurava Miśra, Court-Scholar and celebrated warrior, mentioned in the Garuḍa Pillar Inscription of Dināǰpur; merchant Loka Datta mentioned in the Bāghāurā Image Inscription of Tripura; betel-grower Gangādāsa mentioned in the Pāikpārā-Betkā Image Inscription; Bhavadeva Bhatta, the great scholar, mentioned in the Bhuvaneśvara Inscription of the twelfth century A.D.; Sahadeva, the veterenary surgeon, mentioned the Stone Inscription of Nayapāladeva found in Gayā: A.D. 1038-1055, etc.)[1] Probably the Brāhmaṇas of Bengal were not particularly eager to act as Vaiṣṇava priests. According to the Khālimpur Inscription of Dharmapāla, a Lāta or South Gujarātī Brāhmaṇa came to Bengal to work as the priest of a Nārāyaṇa temple.[2]

The doctrine of *bhakti* is not stated in the inscriptions. In line 30 of the Mādhāinagar Copper Plate Lakṣmaṇa Sena is described as "a veritable Nārāyaṇa."[3] This is deification of monarchy in which the self-effacement of *bhakti* has no place.

At first the martial element in Vaiṣṇavism was attractive to the kings. Viṣṇu, the wielder of the murderous *Cakra* or discus was worshipped. (Cf. Śusuniā Rock Inscription, Bānkura, A.D. 300; Mallasarul Inscription, Burdwan, A.D. 500).[4] The *Vyūha* concept, too, had considerable following.[5] Some other forms of Viṣṇu, which were important enough to have rituals now unidentifiable, were also worshipped, e.g. *Govindaśvāmin* in Baigrām Copper Plate, *Kokamukhaśvāmin* in Damodarpur Copper Plate, *Lokanātha* in Lokanātha Inscription of Tripura, *Nanna-Nārāyaṇa*

1. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, pp. 61, 71, 150; S. Mukherji, op. cit. pp. 38, 41-42.
2. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, p. 95
3. Ibid, p. 277
4. Ibid., pp. 40, 87
5. The controversial *Vyūha* implications of Gunāighar Inscription of Vainya Gupta and Deopārā Inscription of Vijayasena are explained by S. Mukherji, op.cit. pp. 24-27, 68-69.

in the Khālimpur Inscription of Dharmapāla.[1] The *Bhāgavata* idea probably gained some currency towards the end of the fifth century A.D. In the Mālliā Grant of that date Jayanāga of Karṇasuvarṇa (Murshidābad, West Bengal) is referred to as a great *Bhāgavata*.[2]

Initially Viṣṇu had one consort, Lakṣmī. Two elephants sprinkle water on her in the seal of the Lokanātha Inscription of Tripurā.[3] But Viṣṇu had two consorts in the Inscription of Nayapāladeva (A.D. 1038-1055) found in Gayā.[4]

In the Nārāyaṇa form Viṣṇu was, of course, a Brāhmaṇical God. Slowly the *Avatāra* concept gained prominence in Bengal. This is perhaps evident in the popularity of Vaiṣṇava proper names mentioned in some inscriptions.[5] Worship of the *Vāmana* or Dwarf-incarnation is referred to in the Bhāgalpur Inscription of Narāyaṇapāla.[6] *Vāmana* images have been found in three places in Dacca district.[7] The *Nṛsiṃha* incarnation grew popular during the Sena rule, and remained popular even at the end of the fifteenth century.[8] Nṛsiṃha images have been found in Dacca, Dināj pur and Rājshāhī.[9]

The *Varāha* or Boar incarnation became popular probably between the tenth and the twelfth centuries. Boar images, sculp-

1. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, pp. 49, 61 ; *Epigraphica Indica*, XIX, p. 301 ; Promode Lāl Paul, *The Early History of Bengal*, II, Ch. XI, pp. 90-94
2. S. Mukherji, op.cit., pp. 21-22
3. *Epigraphica Indica*, XIX, p. 301
4. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, p. 141
5. Ibid., pp. 74, 197 : Lines 4-6 of the Faridpur Copper Plate Inscription of Dharmāditya, and lines 46-49 of the Bāṇgarh Copper Plate Inscription of Mahipāla (A.D. 988-1023)
6. N.K. Bhattaśālī, *Iconography of the Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, edition 1972, pp. 77-93 ; 93-107
7. Ibid., pp. 77-93
8. The *Nṛsiṃha* incarnation is mentioned in the Sundarban Copper Plate Inscription of Lakṣmaṇa Sena, in which he is described as *Paramanārasiṃha*. It is also mentioned in Bhavadeva Bhatta's Bhuvaneśvara Inscription, Verse 21. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, p. 290 and p. 353
9. N. K. Bhattaśālī, op. cit. pp. 77-93

tured in these centuries, have been found in East Bengal, Burdwan and Murshidabad.[1]

The legends of Kṛṣṇa were sculptured on the panels of the Pāhārpur temple.[2] But the flute-playing Kṛṣṇa was not the favourite God of the zingoist kings. It is said in the Bhāgalpur Inscription of Nārāyaṇapāla that the king's activities did not resemble those of Kṛṣṇa.[3] Kṛṣṇa's sports with the milkmaids are just mentioned in the Belāvā Inscription.[4] Kṛṣṇa's foster-parents are referred to in the Garuḍa Pillar Inscription of Lakṣmaṇa Sena.[5] The legend of the 'human' Kṛṣṇa given in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, the *Padmapurāṇa* and the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* is not prominent in the epigraphic records.

The ten *Avatāras* are found inscribed on some *Viṣṇupaṭṭas* or Viṣṇu-slabs discovered in various areas of North Bengal and East Bengal.[6]

At least two ideas which were later on accepted by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are found to have been mentioned in two separate inscriptions. In the Belāvā Inscription, the kings are described as 'friends of Hari'. Perhaps this is the earliest postulation of the *Sakhyabhāva* or 'Friendly Mood' which is regarded as one of the basic 'moods' in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology and aesthetics.[7] Secondly, *Sālokya* or 'Presence in God's abode' is mentioned as one of the aims of the installation of Viṣṇu image in the Viṣṇu Image Inscription of Keor.[8] In Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology *Sālokya* is considered a distinct type of release from the wordly bondage. The Brāhmaṇical *Pancopāsanā* tradition and the prevalence of

1. Ibid.
2. The Vaiṣṇava leaven in Pāhārpur sculpture has been explained by K. N. Dikshit, *Excavations at Pāhārpur, Bengal.* Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 55, Office of the Superintendent of Goverment Printing, 1939, and S. K. Bhattāchārya, *Kṛṣṇa Cult,* pp. 75-76.
3. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, p 166, verse 15.
4. Ibid., p. 237, line 6.
5. Ibid., p. 153, line 18 ; p. 279, line 17.
6. N. K. Bhattaśālī, op. cit. pp. 89 f.
7. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, p. 237, verse 5.
8. In Dacca, thirteenth century. N. K. Bhattaśālī, op. cit. pp. 89 f.

Buddhism gave Vaiṣṇavism in early mediaeval Bengal a syncretic character. Ribhugupta, President of the guild of merchants, built temples and store-rooms for both Śiva and Viṣṇu.[1] A man named Manāmraśarman paid obeisance to both Viṣṇu and Buddha (cf. Tortoise-shell Inscription of Vajrayoginī).[2] In Pāikor village, Birbhūm, where Kṛṣṇa is worshipped according to Tāntrika rites,[3] a pillar with an inscription dedicated presumably to the snake-goddess, Manasā, was discovered.[4] The Deopārā Grant of Vijayasena mentions the installation of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Lakṣmī and Pārvatī in the Pradyumneśvara temple.[5] This record undoubtedly signifies Śiva-Viṣnu syncretism, the merit of which is explained in the *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa*.[6] Some scholars think that Pradyumneśvara was a combined form of Harihara.[7]

II

The worship of Kṛṣṇa, which became the basis of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava creed, was not particularly popular in early mediaeval Bengal. Kṛṣṇa worship is scarcely mentioned in the inscriptions. Kṛṣṇa was regarded merely as an *Avatāra* of Viṣṇu. His sports with the milkmaids are perfunctorily mentioned in one or two inscriptions. The worship of Vāsudeva-Nārāyaṇa, *Vāmana*, *Varāha* and *Nṛsiṃha* and even of Pradyumna of the *Vyūha* concept was more popular than that of Kṛṣṇa. But certain developments gradually led to the ascendancy of Kṛṣṇa over the other *avatāras* of Viṣṇu. The heroic mood and the martial spirit gradually disappeard from the Hindu world. The frequent rise and fall of transient kingdoms, the consequent 'Balkanisation' of India, the deep shadows of religiosity lengthening northwards from the Deccan, the coming of the Muhammadans,

1. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, p. 61.
2. S. Mukherji, op. cit. pp. 41-42.
3. *Catalogue of the Dacca Museum*, pls. LXXXIX (A), XC (D), LXXXIX (B) & (C).
4. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Birbhūm Vivaraṇ*, II, p. 10.
5. N. G. Majumdār, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III pp. 42-46.
6. *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa*, Bangabāsī ed. II, Ch. 6.
7. S. Mukherji, op. cit., 68-69.

the unending dynastic aggressions and wars—these, no doubt, considerably enfeebled the position of the Brāhmaṇical leaders of the Hindu society. They tried to avert a crisis by supporting reaction and extreme conservatism. Their conservatism merely isolated them from the people, among whom 'non-Vedic' religious ideas grew popular.[1] The romantic version of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legend was possibly a sort of reaction to what W.G.Archer describes as "tightening of domestic morals."[2] Sanskrit poets began to write numerous poems on the night life of the gods. Such poems were relished by the polygamous kings and courtiers; such poems were a source of income to their composers, the great majority of whom were poor.[3] At least in Apabhraṃśa literature the loves of Kṛṣṇa might have been a popular theme since the time of Kālidāsa. A few *Prākṛta* verses on the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme were included in *Gāthāsaptaśatī*.[4] Māgha's *Śiśupālavadhakāvyam* shows a curious combination of the sexual element and the heroic mood in a poetic delineation of th e *Mahābhārata* legend of Kṛṣṇa's slaying of Śiśupāla. Kṣemendra wrote *Daśāvatāracartiaṁ* in the eleventh century.[5]

In Bengal Vaiṣṇavism assumed a tangible shape during the twelfth century which was the century of Sena rule. The pristine *bhakti* movement had already been set on a strong basis in the Deccan by Ācārya Rāmānuja (d.1137 A.D.), the celebrated author of *Śrībhāṣya* and the organizer of a party of seventy-four spiritual leaders who preached *Viśiṣṭādvaitavāda*. The early Sena rulers came to Bengal from Canara country.[6] Possibly with them came

1. The extremely reactionary attitude of the Brāhmaṇas and *Smṛti* writers of the period from 1095 to the middle of the thirteenth century has been discussed by Jaidev Gāngulī in "The Social and Religious Background of the Study of Smṛti in Mithila", *Our Heritage*, 1962, Vol. X, I, pp. 37-55.
2. W. G. Archer, *Loves of Krishna*, p. 73.
3. S. N. Dasgupta, S. K. De, *A History of Sanskrit Literature: Classical Period*, Calcutta University, 1962, intro. pp. XXXII-XXXIV-VI; also, SRK, intro. pp. LI-LVI.
4. *Gāthāsaptaśatī*, Nirṇayasāgara Press, 1933, I : 89 ; II : 14 ; V : 47.
5. Published by the Nirṇayasāgara Press in Kāvyamālā Series no. 26. It has 10 chapters (cantos) with 1764 verses.
6. *The Deopārā Praśasti* of Vijayasena, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, p. 42 ; *The Mādhāinagar Copper Plate of Lakṣmaṇasena*, Ibid, p. 106.

bhakti as a philosophical principle and as a way of life. The *Śrī Vaiṣṇava* influence is faintly discernible in the importance attached to the goddess Lakṣmī or Kamalā in the inscriptions of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. A synthesis of the *Vyūha* and *avatāra* doctrines might also have been effected in the twelfth century.[1]

A Vaiṣṇava literature possibly developed in Bengal during the first quarter of the eigth century A.D.[2] It is believed that this literature was mainly Apabhraṃśa. It is also believed that in the *Gītagovinda* Jayadeva, who is regarded as a Bengali poet, merely followed the Apabhraṃśa tradition.[3] There are legends about his wife, Padmāvati, who was probably a dancer.[4] The Nimvārka sect regards Jayadeva as one of its *gurus*.[5] Jayadeva might have been influenced by the Kṛṣṇa legend of the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*.[6] The extant modes of rendering the verses of the *Gītagovinda* into songs are of Canarese origin.[7] The *bhakti* element in the *Gītagovinda* is concentrated in the concept of Kṛṣṇa, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, as the lover of Rādhā. But eroticism is the basic feature of this concept. Some coital postures are explained in the commentaries on verses 4 and 5 of Canto 2.[8] Tucci

1. S. C. Mukherji, op. cit. pp. 25-26. Gopināth Kavirāj, *Bhārātīya Sādhanār Dhārā*, pp. 6-7.
2. Haraprasād Śāstrī, "Literary History of the Pāla Period", JBORS, V, ii, 1919 ; also, ODBL, I, p. 81.
3. Jayadeva has also been claimed for Mithilā and Orissā. Vide, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts of Orissa in the Collection of the Orissa State Museum, Bhuvanesvara*, ed. Kedārnāth Mahāpātra, 1960, pp.XXX-LXI.
4. *Gītagovinda*, Nirṇayasagar ed. 1929, "Prastāvanā", pp. 5-19. Vide, *Sekaśubhodayā of Halāyudha Miśra*, ed. Sukumar Sen, The Asiatic Soeiety, Calcutta, 1963, p. 67, where Padmāvatī is described as a specialist-singer of *Gāndhārarāga*.
5. Dhananjayadāsa Kāthiyābābā, *Bānglādeśe Nimvārka Sampradāyera Vivaraṇa*, vol. 5, pp. 15-39.
6. B. B. Majumdar, *Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend*, Ch. I, Appendix : Chs. III-IV.
7. Nihārranjan Rāy, *Bangālīr Itihās*, p. 401 ; the extant modes are explained by Aichiyar Kauryvai, *Gitagovinda aud its Abhinaya*, ed. Vāsudev Śāstrī, Tanjore, Sarasvati Mahal Library, 1963 ; also, by Svāmī Prajnānānanda, *Padāvalīkīrtaner Itihās*, Vol. I, Ch. 10 and 11.
8. *Gītagovinda*, pp. 46-48.

explains the erotic symbolism of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *līlā* delineated in the *Gītagovinda*.[1] A modern investigator finds in it a curious combination of sacred and profane love.[2] Haraprasād Śāstrī and Suniti Kumar Chatterji thought that Jayadeva was a Sahajiyā mystic.[3]

In verse 3 of Canto I, Jayadeva requests everybody to read his work, 'pleasant, tender and lovable', with a view to contemplating the glory of God Hari. The idea of *contemplation* or *smaraṇa* of the sports of Kṛṣṇa and his bliss-attributes was later transformed into a basic concept of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology.

Some scholars have unconsciously expressed their feeling of revulsion at the unconcealed eroticism of the *Gītagovinda*. They have refused to believe that such an erotic *Kāvya* as the *Gītagovinda* could be written in Sanskrit, the language of wry sophistication. According to Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the songs of the *Gītagovinda* were originally composed "in some Prakritic speech, which in this case would be either Western Apabhraṃśa as written in the East, or Old Bengali, both alternatives being equally likely." This view is supported by Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopadhyāya.[4] Sukumar Sen thinks that the *Gītagovinda* was considerably influenced by the prevalent Avahatta songs.[5]

S.K. De opines that the *Gītagovinda* might have been "modelled ...on the prototype of the popular Kṛṣṇa-yātrā in its choral and

1. G. Tucci, *Ratilīlā*, p. 80 f.
2. Lee Siegel, *Sacred and Profane : Dimensions of Love in Indian Traditions as exemplified in the Gitagovinda of Jayadeva*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1978.
3. ODBL. I, p. 126 ; S. K. Chatterji later on wrote that Jayadeva was a "Smārta Pancopāsaka". *Jayadeva*, p. 13.
4. ODBL, Part I, pp. 125-126 : Similar verses on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa love-sports occur in *Prākṛtapaingala* : pp. 334, 570, 576, 581, 586, and *Prākṛtakalpataru*, verses 4, 7, 9, 12, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 33, 34, 35. But according to S. K. Chatterji, *Prākṛtapaingala* in its present form, dates from the latter half of the 14th. century. See, Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Kavi Jayadeva O Śri Gītagovinda*, pp. 16, 24-25, 68-70 where he describes the influence of vernacular love-poetry on the *Gītagovinda*.
5. *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, I, I, pp. 45-46.

melodramatic peculiarities".[1] The work also "bears closer resemblance to the spirit and style of Apabhraṃśa or vernacular poetry." But S.K. De does not support the view that the Sanskrit *Gītagovinda* had an Apabhraṃśa original. He thinks that the *Gītagovinda*, like Rāmakṛṣṇa's *Gopālakelicandrikā*, belonged to "an irregular type".[2]

So long as the Apabhraṃśa or the Old Bengali *Gītagovinda* remains undiscovered, one must believe that the work was written in Sanskrit. The singularity of the work consists in its wonderful language and rhyme, which could not possibly be re-created in a translation. It must also be noted that the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa had already become a subject of folk-songs when Jayadeva wrote his masterpiece. A Bengali poet named Dimboka composed a verse on this theme.[3] Daniel H.H. Ingalls has translated the verse in the following manner:

> "The pilgrims in the street have warded off the painful cold with their broad quilts sewn of a hundred rags; and now with voices clear and sweet they break the morning slumber of the city folk with the songs of the secret love of Mādhava and Rādhā."[4]

The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa folk-songs composed in the vernaculars of the eleventh century are yet to be collected in an anthology. Refined Sanskrit verses on Viṣṇu and his *avatāras* have, however, been collected in different anthologies. Such verses might have a socio-religious background. As Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya has suggested, these verses and the *Gītagovinda* of Jayadeva might have been influenced by folk-poetry.[5] These Sanskrit verses at least make it evident that the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legend had become universally popular in the twelfth century. An alphabetical list of the poets who wrote verses on Viṣṇu. Lakṣmī, Hari, Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā and the *avatāras* is given below:

1. Sushil Kumar De, *Bengal's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature and Studies in Bengal Vaiṣṇavism*, 1960,, p. 79.
2. Ibid., pp. 80-81.
3. SRK, Verse 980.
4. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, *Sanskrit Poetry from Vidyākara's Treasury*, p. 208.
5. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Kavi Jayadeva O Śrī Gītagovinda*, Calcutta, third ed. 1955, pp. 16, 24, 25, 68-70.

1. Abhinanda. Verses 256, 262, 267 of SKM.
2. Amṛtadatta. Verse 43 of SV.
3. Ācārya Gopīka. Verses 275, 344 of SKM.
4. Banamālī. Verse 255 of SKM.
5. Bāṇa. Verse 112 of SRK.
6. Bhagīratha. Verses 142 of SRK, 292 of SKM and 45 of KVS.
7. Bhatta Culitaka. Verse 39 of SV.
8. Bhattaśālīya Pitāmvara. Verse 266 of SKM.
9. Bhavagramīṇa Vāthoka. Verse 349 of SKM.
10. Bhāsa. Verse 138 of SRK.
11. Bhānu. Verse 313 of SKM.
12. Bhāravī. Verse 331 of SKM.
13. Bhojadeva. Verse 329 of SKM.
14. Cakrapāṇī. Verse 269 of SKM.
15. Cirantanaśaraṇa. Verse 30 of KVS.
16. Dakṣa (or Hanumāna). Verse 44 of KVS.
17. Dākṣināṭya. Verse 340 of SKM.
18. Divākaradatta. Verse 254 of SKM.
19. Gaṇapati. Verse 337 of SKM.
20. Halāyudha. Verses 314 of SKM, and 48 of KVS.
21 Indubhatta. Verse 33 of SV.
22. Jayadeva. 29 verses collected in SKM.
23. Jīvaka. Verse 38 of SV.
24. Keśavasena (King). Verses 270, 322 of SKM.
25. Keśara Koliyanātha. Verse 285 of SKM.
26. Kṣemeśvara. Verse 334 of SKM.
27. Kulaśekhara. Verses 316-319 of SKM.
28. Kumuda. Verse 119 of SP.
29. Lakṣmaṇasena (King). Verses 272, 282 of SKM.
30. Lakṣmīdhara. Verse 281 of SKM.
31. Mahādeva. Verse 333 of SKM.
32. Mahīdhara. Verse 252 of SKM.
33. Mayūra. Verse 261 of SKM.
34. Mālāyudha. Verse 146 of SRK.
35. Murāri. Verses 106-107, 117 of SRK, 348 of SKM, 29 of KVS.
36. Nīla. 306 of SKM.
37. Pancatantra. Verse 309 of SKM.
38. Puṃśoka. Verse 308 of SKM.
39. Puṇḍarīka. Verse 335 of SKM.
40. Puruṣottama (Deva). Verses 127 of SRK, 39 of KVS.
41. Puṣpaka. Verse 136 of SRK.
42. Raghunandana. Verses 135 of SRK, 338 of SKM; 341 of SKM, 25 of KVS.

43. Ratnākara. Verse 35 of SV.
44. Rājaśekhara. Verses 113, 132 of SRK.
45. Sāgara. Verse 325 of SKM.
46. Sāmantabhadra. Verse 312 of SKM.
47. Śankara. Verse 300 of SKM.
48. Śankaradeva. Verse 327 of SKM.
49. Śaraṇadeva. Verse 345 of SKM.
50. Śaraṇa. Verse 303 of SKM.
51. Śatānanda. Verses 123 of SRK, 257 of SKM, 35 of KVS.
52. Soluka. Verses 342, 346 of SKM.
53. Sannoka or Solloka. Verses 129, 140, 145 of SRK, 296 of SKM, 42, 47 of KVS.
54. Śubhanka. Verses 109 of SRK, 293 of SKM.
55. Śubhankara. Verse 263 of SKM.
56. Tilacandra. Verse 315 of SKM.
57. Udbhata. Verse 287 of SKM.
58. Umāpatidhara. Verses 259, 273-274, 283, 301, 332 of SKM.
59. Vardhamāna. Verse 268 of SKM.
60. Vararuci. Verse 339 of SKM.
61. Varāhamihira. Verse 134 of SRK.
62. Vasundhara. Verse 120 of SP.
63. Vākpati. Verses 104, 105, 108, 114-116, 124, 141, 143 of SRK; 276, 311, 321 of SKM; 20, 28, 36, 43 of KVS.
64. Vibhutibala. Verse 34 of SV.
65. Vilvamangala. Verse 115 of SP.
66. Vīrasarasvatī. Verse 310 of SKM.
67. Virinci. Verse 264 of SKM.
68. Viśākhadatta. Verse 133 of SRK.
69. Vyāsadeva. Verses 125 of SRK, 295 of SKM.
70. Vaidyoka. Verses 147 of SRK, 49 of KVS.
71. Yogeśvara. Verse 288 of SKM.

Of these poets only Kulaśekhara composed some verses on *bhakti*, four of which are collected in *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*. A verse composed by Vilvamangala, whose *Śrīkṛṣṇākarṇāmṛta* was regarded as a basic text by Caitanya, is quoted in the *Paddhati* of Śārṇgadhara. Many other verses on Viṣṇu were composed by unknown poets.

It is interesting to note that Rupa Gosvāmin included in his *Padyāvalī* the verses composed by Abhinanda (p.140), Banamālī (p. 130), Govardhanācārya (pp. 173, 224, 285, 356), Cakrapāṇi (p. 262), Dākṣinātya (pp. 12, 57, 75, 111, 283), Lakṣmaṇasena (pp. 185, 189, 242), Lakṣmīdhara (pp. 39, 43), Mayūra (p. 138), Nīla (p. 357),

Pancatantra (p. 358), Puruṣottamadeva (pp. 56, 147, 152, 204-05), Śankara (pp. 52, 73, 305, 339), Śaraṇa (pp. 156, 217, 244, 247, 350-51), Śubhanka or Śubhanga (pp. 2, 249), Umāpatidhara (pp. 139, 241, 352-53), Vīrasarasvatī (p. 349), and Yogeśvara (p. 143).

Sukumar Sen argues that the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* is not mentioned in Sarvānanda's *Tīkāsarvasva* and Bṛhaspati Miśra's *Padacandrikā* commentaries on the *Amarakoṣa* (fifteenth century A.D.). So the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, which was imported from Tirhut into Bengal, was unknown to the Bengalis before the fifteenth century A.D.[1] These arguments are not acceptable to Jāṇhavīkumār Chakravartī.[2] He writes that simply because the *Bhāgavata* was not mentioned in these works one should not come to the conclusion that it was unknown to the Bengalis before the second half of the fifteenth century. The Sena kings, who worshipped the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, must have been acquainted with the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *ślokas* in SRK and SKM show unmistakable trace of the *Bhāgavata* influence. The verses of Kulaśekhara, collected in SKM, have an unmistakable undertone of *bhakti*. In the seventh *Kallola* of *Varṇaratnākara* of Jyotirīśvara Thākura, which was composed towards the beginning of the fourteenth century in Mithilā,[3] there is a distinct mention of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* as an "Upapurāṇa". This fact substantiates the view of Sukumar Sen that the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* might have come to Bengal from Tirhut.

Various episodes, mentioned in the *Viṣṇupurāna*, *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* and the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, are either described or referred to in the *Āryāsaptaśatī* of Govardhanācārya.[4] The *Āryāsaptaśatī* creates the impression that Govardhanācārya, a contemporary of

1. Sukumar Sen, *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Part I. 1, p. 99.
2. Jāṇhavikumār Chakravartī, *Āryāsaptaśatī O Gauḍavanga*, Sanyal & Co. College Square, Calcutta, B. S. 1378 (1971), p. 85 f.
3. *Varṇaratnākara*, ed. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Babua Miśra, The Asiatic Society, 1940, p. 60. An interesting find in Patna was a copy of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, dated 1088 A.D.: Gītā Chattopādhyāya, *Bhāgavata O Bāṅglā Sahitya*, p. 108.
4. *Āryāsaptaśatī*, with the commentary of Ananta Paṇḍita, Nirṇayasāgara Press, Bombay, 1934, verses 72, 104, 119, 153, 174, 286, 289, 310, 344, 379, 398, 411, 431, 437, 456, 488, 508, 509, 570, 577.

Jayadeva, was deeply acquainted with the *Bhāgavata* legend of Kṛṣṇa. He fully exploited the erotic symbolism of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śiva-Gaurī legends. Very interesting is the fact that the poet explains Rādhā's superiority to Lakṣmī in verse 509:

> Females with big eyes (probably the attendant deities) live on the coast of the sea of *Kṣīra* or thickly boiled milk. The hot sighs of Lakṣmī transform much of this milk into lumps, which are eaten by those females. Even these females sing the glory of Rādhā.[1]

This curious verse indicates the growing popularity of Rādhā worship even in the twelfth century. The legend of Kṛṣṇ's victory over the monstrous serpent Kāliya, which later formed the basis of the melodramatic *Kṛṣṇayātrā* in Bengal, is referred to in three verses of the *Āryāsaptaśatī*.[2]

III

The principal Vaiṣṇava *Upapurāṇas*, which were composed between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries, were the following[3]:

a: *Ādipurāṇa*
b: *Bhaviṣyottara*, or Part V of *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*
c: *Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa*
d: *Bṛhannāradīyapurāṇa*
e: *Kalkipurāṇa*
f: *Kriyāyogasāra*, a part of the *Pādmapurāṇa*

1. Ibid, p. 204. Ananta Paṇḍita comments that even Lakṣmī suffered from the pang of having a *Sapatnī* or co-wife.
2. Ibid. verses 153, 398, 570.
3. Full discussion of the historical evidence found in these works by R. C. Hazra, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas: Saura and Vaiṣṇava Upapurāṇas*. Vol. I. Calcutta, Calcutta Sanskrit College, 1958. The bibliographical data with regard to the works mentioned above are as follows:
   A: Bombay: Kṣemarāja Śrīkṛṣṇadāsa. Venkateśwara Press, Śaka 1829.
   B: Bombay: Kṣemarāja Śrīkṛṣṇadāsa. Venkateśwara Press. A.D. 1897.
   C: Ed. Pancānan Tarkaratna. Calcutta. Bangabāsī Press. 2nd. ed. 1907.
   D: Ed Pancānan Tarkaratna. Calcutta. Bangabāsī Press. 2nd. ed. 1909.
   E: Ed. Pancānan Tarkaratna. Calcutta. Bangabāsī Press. 1909.
   F: Bombay; Venkateśwara Press. Saka 1817.

g: *Narasiṃhapurāṇa*
h: *Sāmbapurāṇa*
i: *Viṣṇudharmottara*
j: *Viṣṇudhrma.*

According to R.C. Hazra these *Purāṇas* were composed mainly by the Brāhmaṇical elements with a view to preserving their high status and the caste traditions at a time when the Hindu world was in doldrums. Vaiṣṇavism was used as a compromise between old and new ways of life, or as a convenient tool of continuous acculturation. The composition of these works gradually led to the disappearance of some of the earlier mythologies. Some extant myths were also considerably modified.[1]

Viṣṇudharma, an unpublished *Upapurāṇa*[2] gives an explanation of the reasons behind the propagation of Vaiṣṇavism as a 'Vedic' and Brāhmaṇical faith. According to it, the traditional Hindu social order and norms had been dangerously enfeebled by the continuous preaching of heretical and materialist doctrines. The Śūdras were enjoying the fruits of vertical mobility. The non-Brāhmaṇical conglomerates were growing oblivious of the observance of purificatory rites. The Śūdras were becoming more and more affluent. They were also using Buddhist *Hetuvāda* or rationalism against the theory of the manifest destiny of their Brahmaṇa superiors. Buddhist rationalism jeopardized the very rationale of the Brāhmaṇical scriptures. The most effective weapon against such heretical tendencies was theistic *yoga* as preached in *Viṣṇudharma*.[3] Here we get a glimpse of the imperatives which ultimately made Vaiṣṇavism a principal religion in eastern India: the gradual

G: Ed. Uddhavācārya. Bombay. Gopalnārāyaṇ & Co. 2nd. ed. 1911.
H: Bombay. Kṣemarāja Śrīkṛṣṇadāsa. Venkateśwara Press. Śaka 1821.
I: Bombay. Kṣemarāja Śrīkṛṣṇadāsa. Venkateśwara Press. Śaka 1834.
J: Ms. No. 1670 of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

1. Hazra, op. cit. Ch. IV. pp. 346-360.
2. For a description of this MS, see Haraprasād Śāstrī, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Government Collection under the care of the Asiatic Society* of *Bengal*, Vol. V. Calcutta, Asiatic Society, 1928, pp. 764-65.
3. Hazra, op. cit. I, pp. 148-149.

crumbling of the caste hierarchy, the growing affluence of the Śūdra Kulāks and bureaucrats, the dominance of the rationalist intellectuals, the weakness of the Brāhmaṇas who were dependent on their Śūdra clientele for their livelihood. Only devotional mysticism, *plus* a moderate enumeration of the essential rituals could save them. They re-interpreted Vaiṣṇavism according to their basic needs.

We, therefore, find in these works a heavy, almost unrelenting, stress on ritualism and the rationale of the caste divisions. The *Bhaviṣyottara* discusses innumerable *Vratas* or ceremonies, quite a few of which are also found in the earlier *Mātsya-purāṇa*. Devotion is probably regarded by the authors of these mythologies as the mystic sublimation of ritualism, which could not be attained by ordinary individuals. It should, however, be noted that devotion is very often described in many of these works as an expression of the 'servile mood' or *Dāsyabhāva*.[1] The *madhurabhāva*, or the 'erotic mood' of the later Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theologians is not prominent in them. Only the late mediaeval *Ādipurāṇa*, which is perhaps an apocryphal version of an earlier mythology with the same title, and which is supposed to have been composed by a follower of Caitanya, deals mainly with Kṛṣṇa worship and the Vṛndāvana legend. Tāntrika influence is unmistakably discernible in *Sāmbapurāṇa* which contains an interesting account of Sun worship in various parts of India, including Orissa. But *Viṣṇudharma* is free from it. It mentions forty-seven Vaiṣṇava holy places and many *Vratas*.

The *Bṛhannāradīyapurāṇa* and the *Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa* preach the necessity of *Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava* synthesis. This means that there were sane elements who realized the importance of the synthetic approach at a time when Hinduism was undermined by non-Hindu rationalists. *Viṣṇudharmottara*, on the other hand, is really an encyclopaedic work which deals with various matters including statecraft, music and iconography. This means that there were Brāhmaṇa theoreticians who were capable of taking a broad view of the

1. *Dāsyabhāva* is stressed in *Kriyāyogasāra*, *Narasiṃhapurāṇa and Bṛahnnāradīyapurāṇa*. Nārada preaches *Guru* worship. (Hazra, op. cit. I, pp. 239-40).

contemporary Indian civilization. Yet the fact was that they cared more for caste divisions than for social liberalism. They had a very poor opinion about 'women' and the Śūdras. In some of the *Upapurāṇas yoga* and *Bhedābhedavāda* are explained. But it was belived that *bhakti* might cause the disappearance of artificial caste divisions.[1]

The growing influence of Vaiṣṇavism was reflected in the works on *Smṛti*. In the first half of the fifteenth century both Aniruddha Bhatta and Halāyudha, two eminent compilers and interpreters of *Smṛti* rules, wrote short but significant tracts on certain Vaiṣṇava rituals.[2] But long before their advent the *Smṛti* text *Śarasaṃgraha*, which was a part of an undiscovered work titled *Vedavaiṣṇavasiddhāntarahasya*, was written with a view to reconciling the Vedas with the Vaiṣṇava doctrines.[3] Śrīdatta Upādhāya, one of the early *Smṛti*-authorities of Mithilā, wrote a tract on the *Pancarātra* method of Viṣṇu worship.[4] On the other hand the importance of Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa worship is emphasized in *Brhaddharmapurāna*, which even describes the *Rāsayātrā* ceremony.[5] It is believed that the Maithila settlers in Assam "tried to Aryanise

1. The incongruence of caste in *bhakti* worship is explained in *Adipurāṇa*, *Kṛyāyogasāra*, *Narasiṃhapurāṇa*, *Viṣṇudharma*, and *Bṛhannāradīyapurāṇa*.

2. Aniruddha Bhatta was a *Vārendra* Brāhmaṇa, and *guru* of Vallālasena (A. D. 1158-1189). He wrote a work titled *Bhāgavatatattvamanjarī*. Properly speaking it is a work on theology. R. L. Mitra, *Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, Vol. I, p. 191. Halāyudha probably lived between A. D. 1179 and 1205, the time of Lakṣmaṇasena's rule. He was the author of the celebrated *Brāhmaṇasarvasvaṃ*. The authorship of *Vaiṣṇavasarvasvaṃ*, too, is ascribed to him.

3. Haraprasād Śāstrī, *A Catalogue of Palm-leaf and Selected Paper Manu ripts in the Durbur Library of Nepal*, 1905, preface, XIV, XV and XIX.

4. *Chandogāṇhika*, Asiatic Society MS. No. G. 2903, fol. 28A.

5. *Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa*, ed. Pancānana Tarkaratna, Bangabāsī ed. 1893, Book I, Ch. 4, verse 32; Ch. 5, verse 67; the entire Ch. 7; the *Hari* concept in Ch. 8; the necessity of bringing about Śiva-Viṣṇu synthesis in Ch. 9; the value of *Harināma* in Ch. 18; Book II, Śiva-Viṣṇu non-duality in Ch. 6. In Ch. 13 of Book I, *Rāsayātrā* is described.

the country by means of Vaiṣṇavism".[1]

But the aspects of the Kṛṣṇa cult in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries are not very clear. The Kṛṣṇa worshippers had to wage a long war against the Śiva-Śakti worshippers and the votaries of Tāntrika Buddhism.[2] The decadent traditions of Tāntrika Buddhism were somehow preserved by a number of secret societies which obviously practised the worst forms of sexual perversion. The *Ekallavīracaṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*[3], for instance, advises and describes the practice of incest and scatalogical rites. The practice of incest is advised even by the famous *Hebajra Tantra.*[4] D.L. Snellgrove and Alex Wayman[5] suggest that this advice should not be literally interpreted.[5] But the *Yogaratnamālā* commentary on the *Hebajra Tantra* interprets it literally.[6] However, the Tāntrika Buddhists gradually developed a 'love-hate' relationship with the prevalent Hindu cults. The Buddhist Sahajiyās and the Śaiva-Nātha *gurus* like Gorakṣanātha, Jālandhara, and Mīnanātha pursued common aims. The Buddhist *yogīs* paid allegiance to them.[7]

In the wake of the political revolution brought about by the Turko-Afghan conquest of Bengal in the beginning of the thirteenth century, some Buddhists propagated the idea of resisting

1. Jaidev Ganguli, "The Social and Religious Background of the Study of *Smṛti* in Mithilā", *Our Heritage*, Vol. X, 1962, II, p. 51. W. W. Hunter, too, noted the lingering influence of *Smṛti* tradition of Mithilā in Assam: Vide, *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Reprint, 1975, p. 31.
2. The Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava animosity is mentioned in *Brahma Purāṇa* (Gurumandal Publication, Calcutta, 1954, Ch. 56, Verses 63-66. The *Kālikāpurana* advises a Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava compromise in verse 17 of Ch. 80, as well as in Ch. 74.
3. Asiatic Society MS. No. 9089.
4. *Hebajra Tantra*, ed. D. L. Snellgrove, Vol. II, p. 84, p. 154
5. Ibid. Vol. I, Preface, p. VIII. Also, Alex Wayman, *The Buddhist Tantras*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.
6. The *Yogaratnamālā* commentary on verse 13, Part II, Chapter XI of the *Hebajra Tantra* is the following: "*Dolāyetyādineti* caturnāṃ sekānāṃ svabhāvalakṣaṇopadeśakaranāny āha. Doleva lolā. Auparistakaṃ/Atra Strī Kartrī". Then it goes on quoting verses defining specific coital postures. Snellgrove does not explain this outspokenness of the commentary.
7. ODBL, I, pp. 110, 120

the Muhammadans by forming against them a Hindu-Buddhist 'united front'. This idea is spelt out in the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on the *Kālacakratantra*. The Hindus were requested to unite with the Buddhists against the *mlecchas* under the *Kālacakra* banner.[1] But *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, an important work on Tāntrika Buddhist iconography, very clearly expresses its derogatory attitude towards the Hindu gods and goddesses, who are assigned quite 'humiliating positions' in the *maṇḍalas*.[2]

From the appeals for religious unity found in such works as the *Kālikāpurāṇa* and the *Bṛhaddharmottarapurāṇa* it may safely be concluded that the Śaiva-Śāktas and the Vaiṣṇavas were rivals for mass-support. The *Śivadharmottara* advised the Śaivas to open hospitals for the free distribution of medicine and run asylums.[3] According to Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the Śaivas had some following among the *vrātyas* (pariahs) of Magadha.[4] D.D. Kosambi thought that the various types of Śiva-Śakti cults were patronised by the rich land-owners, while Vaiṣṇavism was popular among the peasantry.[5] The temples of Khajuraho and Konārak, which were centres of 'left-handed' Tantra, were built by rich men. On the other hand, the *Pāikpārā-Betkā Vāsudeva Image Inscription*, and the *Copper Plates of Madanpārā and Madhyapārā* of the time of Viśvarupasena (middle of the thirteenth century) "show that the merchant community as a whole (including betel-growers) showed their inclination to Vaiṣṇavism".[6] During the eleventh and the twelfth centuries Vaiṣṇavism was popular in

1. *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, ed. B. Bhattacharyya, Gaekwad Oriental Series, Intro. pp. 20-22
2. Ibid. Various Hindu gods and goddesses are shown to be trodden upon by the terrible Buddhist gods and goddesses in *Navātmaka-herukamaṇḍalaṃ* (p 20), *Yogāmvaramaṇḍalaṃ*, (p. 32), *Dharmadhātuvāgiśvara-maṇḍalaṃ* (pp. 60) *Kālacakramaṇḍalaṃ* (p. 82), etc.
3. *Śivadharmottara* in *Journal of the Gangānāth Jhā Research Institute*, XIII, pp. 19-50
4. ODBL, I, p. 46
5. SRK, Intro. pp. LVI ff. This is also the view of R. S. Śarma: "Material Milieu of Tantricism" in *Indian Society: Historical Probings*, pp. 188-189
6. S. Mukherji, op. cit. p. 38.

the villages of the Munshiganj sub-division of Dacca. Viṣṇu images, most of which were built during these centuries were found in thirty villages.[1]

The Vaiṣṇavas had neutralized the Buddhists by accepting the Buddha as the incarnation of Viṣṇu. The Buddha incarnation is mentioned in Vaḍu Caṇḍīdāsa's *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*.[2] But this incarnation was sneered at by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. In *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* (2: 3: 119), Rūpa Gosvāmin describes the Fish Incarnation as an emblem of *Vivatsarasa*. In his commentary Jīva Gosvāmin wrote:

> *Mīnasthāne Buddho vā pathaniya. Tacceṣṭāyā arocakatvāt, Mīnasya Saccidānandavigrahatvāt.*

Nityānanda simply kicked some Buddhists when they did not answer his questions.[3]

The Vaiṣṇava emphasis on the *Śakti* aspect of Lakṣmī, Kamalā or Rādhā might have stemmed from the worship of the female principle by the Tāntrikas. "Tantricism assumed the form of Pancaratra and transformed Vaisnavism by introducing the mother-goddess into this religion."[4] Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship, with its stress on 'contemplation', almost assumed the form of the contemplative Tāntrika 'right-handed worship', the main principles of which are explained by Lakṣmīdhara in his commentary on the *Ānandalaharī* of Śankarācārya. It is not difficult to find a similarity of the Buddhist *maṇḍala* deities mentioned in such works as the *Hebajra Tantra* and the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* to the 'eight *sakhīs*' of Rādhā.[5] The syncretic ideal presumably grew irresistable when the conquering Mahammadans mounted a furious assault on the *Kāfir* religions. The sects began to develop a 'fundamental unity' because an extremely deviant order faced extinction.

1. Nalinīkānta Bhattaśalī, "Vikrampurer Prācīn Bhāskaryakīrti", *Vikrampur*, (monthly journal), ed. Jogendranāth Gupta, Māgha, B. E. 1320 (1913), p. 184 f.
2. *Srīkṛṣṇakīrtana*, p. 235, verse 4
3. CBH, 1/8, p. 54.
4. R. S. Śarmā, op. cit. p. 189
5. *Hebajra Tantra* Part I, pp. 79-80; *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, see, for instance, *Dharmadhātuvāgiśvaramaṇḍala*, p, 54 f.

IV

"There is" writes R.D. Banerji, "a hiatus in the history of the Vaiṣṇava sect in North-Eastern India from the twelfth to the fifteenth century to fill up which iconography can supply no materials".[1] A Vaiṣṇava temple was built in Tribeṇī-Saptagrām area in the Hooghly district of West Bengal. This temple was converted into a mosque by Zāffar Khān Ghāzi in 1298. Various episodes of *Kṛṣṇalīlā* were sculptured on the panels of the temple, which belonged, according to D. McCutchion, to the lost type of temples of pre-Islamic Bengal.[2]

The steadily growing strength of Vaiṣṇavism in Tirhut-Mithilā and Bengal is seen best in the vernacular poetry. The cultural desolation consequent upon the Muslim invasion was not so great in Bengal as it was in South Bihar.[3] Neither in Mithila nor in Bengal did the Turko-Āfghāns succeed in totally obliterating Brāhmaṇical culture. The impulse to protect the traditional values and institutions of Hindu society was equally strong in both Mithilā and Bengal.

Vidyāpati, the court poet of Mithilā, wrote nine hundred and thirty-three songs on love, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and Śiva-Pārvatī. The date of Vidyāpati is a highly controversial subject. But that he was alive in 1460 has been established as an incontrovertible fact. That he wrote most of his poems and other works during the first half of the fifteenth century is indubitable.[4] G.A. Grierson

1. R. D. Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, 1933, p. 127
2. David McCutchion, *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal*, pp. 1-2; Rev. James Long mentions this temple in "The Banks of the River Bhagirathi", *Select Papers*, ed. M. P. Saha, p. 63,
3. ODBL, I, pp, 101-102, 146-147
4. Jayakānta Miśra thinks that Vidyāpati was born in 1360 or thereabouts. *History of Maithili Literature*, p. 74. But according to Sukumar Sen, the poet was alive in 1460. This conclusion is based upon the discovery of a manuscript of Halāyudha's *Brāhmaṇasarvasva*, which was copied by Rūpadhara, Vidyāpati's pupil, in 1460. The manuscript was discovered in Nepal Durbur Library. Sukumar Sen, *Vidyāpatigoṣṭhī O Gītitriṃśatikā*, pp, 22-23. This date is accepted by Bīmānbihārī Majumdār, *Vidyāpatir Padāvalī*, Intro. pp. 3, 56, 47-48, where some other dates are discussed.

describes the language of his songs, Brajabuli, as a "bastard language", because it was a mixture of Bengali and Maithili languages.[1] His verses, however, provided a lasting model of Vaiṣṇava love-poetry. The major Vaiṣṇava poets of Bengal who followed Vidyāpati's style and wrote lyrics in his language were Jnānadāsa, Gobindadāsa, Balarāmadāsa and Narottama, all of whom belonged to the sixteenth century. Śankara Deva (1449-1568), the great Vaiṣṇava leader of Assam, introduced Brajabuli in Assam.[2] The Assamese writers even wrote plays in Brajabuli. Brajabuli influence percolated into Orissa during the reign of Pratāparudradeva, King of Puri (1504-1532). Rāmānanda Rāya, a prominent bureaucrat of the king, and a Vaiṣṇava, composed hymns in Brajabuli.[3]

Vidyāpati was not a Vaiṣṇava. He was a *smārta pancopāsaka* and a householder.[4] Kṛṣṇa in his songs has thirteen different names, such as, Mādhava, Kānha, Hari, Murāri, Govinda, Dāmodara Banamālī, Madhusūdana or Madhuripu, Gopa, Nandanandana, Kṛṣṇa, Kālā, Mohana, Radhāramana. Mādhava is used one hundred and seventy-five times. Kṛṣṇa is mentioned only once.[5] Vidyāpati created different concepts of Rādhā as a heroine of different moods and situations in accordance with the categories delineated in classical aesthetics. His model was presumably one of the adolescent wives of a mediaeval, royal seraglio. In two verses Rādhā describes Kṛṣṇa as her *pati* and *svāmin*.[6] The idea that Rādhā was a *parakīyā* (another man's wife) to Kṛṣṇa was presumably not acceptable to the poet. In his songs Rādhā is easily the central figure. Herein the influence of the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* and the *Gītagovinda* is discernible. But his description of Mādhava as the

1. G. A. Grierson, *Maithili Chrestomathy*, p. 34
2. Jayakānta Miśra, op. cit. pp, 105-106
3. Priyaranjan Sen, *Rāya Rāmānanda Bhanitāyukta Padāvalī*, published by Māniklāl Dutta, 24 Bāgmāri Road, Calcutta, B. E. 1352 (1945)
4. Haraprasād Śāstrī, ed. Vidyāpati's *Kīrtilatā*, 1924, p. 19; Jayakānta Miśra, op. cit. p. 79.
5. Bimānbihāri Majumdār's analysis in *Vidyāpatir Padāvalī*, Intro. p. 97.
6. *Vidyāpatir Padāvalī*, *Pada*: 498: "*Visari Jāeva Pati Mora*"; *Pada*, 499; "*Se Dekhi Sāmi Dārāyon*" pp. 322-323.

'Supreme Lord' in many verses may be regarded as the evidence of the influence of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. In all the verses the Supreme God is invisible but omnipresent. Verse 763 (*Vidyāpatir Padāvalī*, p. 475) is a soul-stirring prayer :

> As hot sand blots water, so my sons, friends and women blotted me. I forgot you, and concentrated my attention on them. How can I achieve redemption ? Mādhava, I have no hope of any final release. But you redeem the world ; you are kind to the poor and the lowly. I, therefore, place my trust in you.

Rādhā is the central figure of the Vaiṣṇava *padāvalī* of Vidyāpati.[1] But on *Bhakti* as a philosophical principle Vidyāpati wrote no song or verse. Merely because he wrote hundreds of songs on Rādhā and Mādhava he cannot be regarded as a Vaiṣṇava *bhakta* or devotee. Once again the fact that such songs were a source of income to the talented poet dependent on royal patronage is unmistakably manifest in the last lines of the verses in which he paid homage to his royal patrons. In the Dārbhānga Royal Library there is a manuscript of the *Bhāgvata-purāṇa* with the inscription, "*Vidyapater Lipiriyam*". Bimānbihārī Majumdār regards the inscription as indisputable evidence of Vidyāpati's adherence to Vaiṣṇavism.[2] But even supposing that Vidyāpati himself copied the manuscript of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, it would rather be difficult to regard him as a Vaiṣṇava, in the absence of other definite proofs. Very probably, as a worshipper of five gods, he believed in religious eclecticism. His devotion for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa was equal to his devotion for Śiva and Pārvatī.

Some other contemporary poets of Mithila wrote Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa lyrics. They were Umāpati, Jayānanda, Caturbhuja, Kaviśekhara, Bhanjana and Cakrapāṇi.[3]

1. Jayadeva is mentioned in verse 558, p. 358. In verse 468, p. 302, the poet says that Murāri (Kṛṣṇa) is easily captivated by *Prema* or Love: *Premako Vasa Hota Murāri.*
2. *Vidyāpatir Padāvalī*, Intro. pp. 49, 118
3. Jayakānta Miśra, op. cit. pp. 116-125; Sukumar Sen, *Vidyāpatigoṣṭhi*, 63-95; *Vidyāpātir Padavalī*, Intro. 106-107

V

Nānur village in Bīrbhūm, West Bengal, is regarded as the birth-place of Caṇḍīdāsa, author of numerous songs on Vaiṣṇava 'love'. The controversy about the identity of Caṇḍīdāsa, now more than fifty years old, is yet to be finally settled.[1] There was once an idea that a single Caṇḍīdāsa wrote different types of Vaiṣṇava poems. After the discovery of *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* of Vaḍu Ananta Caṇḍīdāsa in B.E. 1323 (1916), the Caṇḍīdāsa controversy grew very sharp indeed. One of the scholars involved in it stuck to the theory that a single Caṇḍīdāsa wrote both *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* and the *Padāvalī*. He was compared to Pāṇini, who was believed to have seen no difference between a dog, a young man and Indra: "*Aśeṣavit Pāṇinirekasūtre Śvānaṃ Yuvānaṃ Maghavānamāha*!"[2] Now it is admitted that there were at least two different Caṇḍīdāsas, if not more, with different dates.[3] One was, of course, Vaḍu Cāṇḍīdāsa, author of *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*; the other was the author of *Padāvalī* songs and songs on Sahajiyā concepts.

Vaḍu Ananta Caṇḍīdāsa was a worshipper of Vāsulī. *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* was composed during the second half of the fourteenth century.[4] There are some verses in it which indicate Caṇḍīdāsa's knowledge of the Buddhist *caryā* songs and the vocabulary of *Yoga*.[5]

The Rādhā of *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*, however, is very different from

1. The controversy is found in PKT, V, pp. 89-107; Sukumar Sen, "Caṇḍīdāsa Samasyā" in *Vaiṣṇavīya Nivandha*, pp. 170-200, Manīndramohan Basu, *Dīnacaṇḍīdāser Padāvali* I, Intro. pp. 2-5; E. C. Dimock, *The Place of the Hidden Moon*, 57-66
2. Comparison made by Satish Chandra Rāy in PKT, V, p. 92
3. Sukumar Sen, "Caṇḍīdāsa Samasyā", *Vaiṣṇavīya Nivandha*, pp. 170-200
4. ODBL. I, pp. 128-129. It is regarded as a work of the early Middle Bengali stage.
5. *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*. p. 38: "Āpana Mānse Hariṇī Jagatera Vairī". This is copied from Bhusuka's "Apanā Mānso Hariṇā Vairī": Song no. 6 in *Hājār Bacharer Purāṇa Bānglā Bhāṣāy Bauddha Gān O Doh̤ā*, ed. Haraprasād Śastri, New ed. B. E. 1366 (1959), p. 12. The *Yoga* song in *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* occurs in pp. 358-359; "Ahonisi Yoga Dheāi/Manapavana Gagane Rahāi//"

the Rādhā of Vidyāpati's songs. In the former, she is a simple village girl constantly chased and teased by Kṛṣṇa, who is but a cowherd with divine pretensions. *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* lay forgotten for centuries. The originality of its language was scarcely tampered with by later copyists. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas were either unaware of its existence, or preferred to neglect it presumably because Vaḍu Caṇḍīdāsa's description of the amorous conduct of Kṛṣṇa was offensive to their theology. "Nowhere else in the whole range of Indian literature", comments Bimānbiharī Majumdār, "has Kṛṣṇa been villified so much as in this work."[1]

Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana sheds much light on the pre-Caitanya Kṛṣṇa cult in Bengal. It has been assumed that this work was written for a puppet show. If the assumption is correct, it would lead to the conclusion that the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legend had become popular in the villages.[2] Vaḍu Caṇḍīdāsa worshipped Vāsulī whose worship was in vogue in some regions of Bengal even in the sixteenth century.[3] The poet declares again and again that he had composed the work at the orders of the said goddess. It seems that the singing of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa songs was an essential ritual of Vāsulī worship, which was not basically different from the Tāntrika worship of Kālī or Durgā. It is interesting to note that the singing of obscene songs is even at present an essential ritual of the worship of goddess Yogādyā of Kṣīragrām in Burdwan district, which is not very far from Nānur in Bīrbhūm, where Caṇḍīdāsa is said to have lived.[4] In *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*, Kṛṣṇa is depicted as a youth who is always trying to seduce Rādhā with the

1. *Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend*, p. 201.
2. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, I, I, p. 148
3. *Vāsulīmangala*, ed. Subal Chandra Bandyopādhyāya and Śubhenduśekhar Sinha Rāy, Calcutta, Bangīya Sāhitya Pariṣat, B. E. 1364 (1957). This work was written towards the beginning of the fifteenth century. According to Maheśvar Dās Vāsulī may be identified with Vāgiśvarī. But this is merely a hypothesis. See, *Suvarṇarekhā*, Calcutta, Calcutta University, 1974, "Maṇgalakāvye Devadevī", p. 629. Vṛnndāvana Dāsa refers to the worship of Vāsulī in CBH, p. 12: *Vāsuli Pūjaye Keha Nānā Upahāre|Madya Māṃsa Diyā Keha Yakṣa Pūjā Kare||*
4. Sukumar Sen, *ut supra*, p. 142

help of an old go-between, whose immodest proposals make Rādhā tremble with anger. Much is made of the inevitable sex-act.[1] These facts strongly indicate the probability of the development, in the fourteenth century, or earlier, of a Tāntrika syndrome which included Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship.

The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult might also have been associated with an unknown fertility cult, faint indications of which may be found in some types of old, but still extant folk-songs of North Bengal.[2]

Caṇḍīdāsa's greatness consisted in his ability to transform a long string of folk-songs into a well-designed and integrated vernacular *Kāvya* which is not entirely bereft of high quality, despite the simplicity of the themes and the deficiency in linguistic sophistication. In *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* the divinity of Kṛṣṇa has been adduced to justify his unjustifiable conduct. Rādhā is at first very much unwilling to fall in love with him. But once she is won over, her dedication becomes absolute. She becomes almost insane when Kṛṣṇa suddenly forsakes her. The songs on *Rādhāviraha* or Rādhā's agony, caused by her separation from Kṛṣṇa, clearly adumbrate the *Māthura* concept of later *Padāvalī* literature.[3] The terms 'Dāna', 'Naukā' and 'Bhāra', used by Caṇḍīdāsa to denote particular episodes, were later used by the *Padāvalī* poets of Bengal. Vaḍu Caṇḍīdāsa was undoubtedly influenced by Jayadeva.[4] The influence of the *bhakti* doctrine is discernible in the songs on *Rādhāviraha*. But Vaḍu Ananta Caṇḍīdāsa's originality lay in his depiction of Rādhā

1. Her anger is expressed in introductory Sanskrit verses. The ultimate coitus is described in *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*, pp. 289-292.
2. Dīnesh Chandra Sen, *Bṛhat Banga*, II, p. 970, 972, 1006. In West Bengal the ritual obscene songs were called *Domcaṇḍālī*, thereby meaning songs composed in the language of the untouchable Doms and Caṇḍālas. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, I, I, p. 142.
3. *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*, pp. 332-398
4. *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*, p. 202: "*Torarati Āso Āse Gelā Abhisāre*", etc. is a translation of Jayadeva's "*Ratisukhasāre Gatamabhisāre*" etc. *Gītagovinda*, p. 80; *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*, p. 217: "*Yadi Kichu Bola Tave Dasanaruci Tommāre*" is a translation of "*Vadasiyadi Kincidapi Dantarucikaumudī*", *Gītagovinda*, p. 128. The verses which describe Rādhā's beauty in "Tāmbulakhaṇḍa" of *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* may be compared with similar songs of Vidyāpati.

as a spirited girl of real flesh blood. This human element in the remarkable work might have rendered it unattractive to the orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, who regarded her as the principal 'bliss-attribute' of Kṛṣṇa.

VI

That the Kṛṣṇa cult was possibly connected with some unidentifiable fertility rites in the villages of north-eastern Bengal would be to some extent apparent from the consideration of the subject-matter of another work named *Harivaṃśa*. It was written by a poet named Bhavānanda, who flourished in the middle of the seventeenth century, and who might have remained alive between 1643 and 1660.[1] The manuscript of this work was discovered in Mymensingh, Comillā, Western Tripurā, Sylhet and Pābnā.[2] *Harivaṃśa* was not composed from the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava point of view. The language of this work is a mixture of the dialects of Mymensingh, Tripurā, Sylhet and Brajabuli. The numerous songs in it are mainly folk-songs which greatly influenced the love-songs composed by the rural poets of Sylhet.[3]

Kṛṣṇa's sex-relations with Rādhā and other milkmaids have been described in this work in a semi-pornological manner. The milkmaids themselves indulge in coitus with Kṛṣṇa in the name of seeking the boon of fertility from Goddess Bhavānī.[4] They brazenly denounce their husbands who are not conversant with *Sahajarati* (easy coitus), of which Kṛṣṇa, still a suckling babe in his mother's presence, is an unrivalled expert.[5] Bhavānanda even describes Kṛṣṇa's incest with a girl named Mahodā.

1. This date is suggested by Sukhamaya Mukhopadhyaya, *Madhyayuger Bānglā Sāhityer Tathya O Kālakraṃa*, Calcutta, G. Bharadvaj & Co, 1974, p. 250.
2. *Kavi Bhavānander Harivaṃśa*, ed. Satish Chandra Ray, Intro, pp. 2-8
3. The total number of folk-songs in *Harivaṃśa* is 125. The great influence of these songs on the folk-songs of Sylhet is explained in *Śrīhatter Lokasaṃgit*, ed. Gurusadaya Datta and Nirmalendu Bhowmik, Intro, pp. 45-47
4. *Harivaṃśa* pp. 122 f.
5. *Harivaṃśa* pp. 122-123

VII

In the first half of the sixteenth century another Caṇḍīdāsa wrote a Vaiṣṇava work named *Bhāvacandrikā*.[1] The author discusses in it the theory of *bhakti*, including *Ragānugā* devotion. *Bhāvacandrikā* indicates the fact that even before the Caitanya movement had grown strong, certain definite theological concepts had gained considerable currency among the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal. The author of this work probably lived in a place near the Ketugrāma village in Kātwa.[2]

Caturbhuja Bhattācārya of Rāmkeli village near Māldā composed *Haricaritakāvyaṃ* in 1493. It had thirteen cantos in which the adventures of Kṛṣṇa were described. The work was written from the devotional point of view.

The high sexual ingredient in the prevailing Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult was given a philosophical coating only after the translation of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* legends into Bengali. The legends were first translated into Bengali by Mālādhar Basu of Kulīngrām, Burdwan, in the middle of the fifteenth century. His famous work is titled *Śrīkṛṣṇavijaya*. This work makes it evident that at least a section of the contemporary Bengali elite society was highly impressed by the ideology of *bhakti* long before Caitanya's advent. Towards the beginning of the fifteenth century even the Bengali exponents of the *Dharmaśāstras* recognised the permissibility of the ritual worship of Kṛṣṇa. Śūlapāni, for instance, wrote some ritualistic work on the subject.[3] The propagation of the *Bhāgavata* legend by high-caste men like Mālādhar Basu[4] made it possible for Vaiṣṇavism to gain a foot-hold even among the orthodox Brāhmaṇas who, according to Vṛndāvana Dāsa, were very much acquain-

1. Rajendralala Mitra, *Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, Nos. 21-31.
2. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, I, I, pp. 182-183
3. *Dolayātrāviveka* and *Rāsayātrāviveka* of Śūlapāni were published in *Sanskrit Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, October, 1941.
4. Mālādhar Basu was known as Guṇarāja Khān. This name was bestowed on him as a title by Ruknuddin Barbak Shah, Sultan of Gauḍa (1459-1474). *Śrīkṛṣṇa Vijaya* (ed. Khagendranāth Mitra, Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1944) was composed between 1473 and 1480.

ted with the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavata* without their interpretations according to the doctrine of *bhakti*.[1]

That the worship of Rāma, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, was highly popular in pre-Caitanya Bengal is amply evidenced by the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Kṛttivāsa, which was composed in the middle of the fifteenth century. An Assamese poet named Mādhava Kandali also wrote a *Pāncalī* on the story of Rāma. Mādhava Kandali's patron was a king named Mahāmāṇikya.

Bhakti is the predominant feature of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Kṛttivāsa. Possibly both *Kṛṣṇadīkṣā* (Kṛṣṇa-initiation) and Rāmadīkṣā (Rāma-initiation) were in vogue in Bengal among the Vaiṣṇavas in the fifteenth century. Caitanya's school-mate, friend and follower Murārī Gupta was a Rāma devotee.[2] The worship of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, such as Rāma, Nṛsiṃha and Kṛṣṇa was characterised by *bhakti* which was enunciated in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.

1. CBH: p. 12: "*Gītābhāgavata ye ye jane paḍay.|Bhaktira Vyākhyāna Nāhi Tāhāra Jihvāya||*
2. CBH: p. 251: "*Henamate Murāri Prabhura Kṛpāpātra|.E Kṛpāra Pātra Save Hanumāna Mātra||* Vṛndāvana Dasa thus describes Murāri Gupta as the incarnation of Hanumāna.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF THE CAITANYA MOVEMENT

I

Epigraphic and literary evidence makes it perfectly clear that Vaiṣṇavism had really gained considerable strength in Bengal long before Caitanya's advent. But it must be noted that the Tantras, too, had innumerable adherents in Bengal. With Kerala and Kashmir Bengal was the third main centre of Tāntrika culture in India. The *Gauḍasaṃpradāya* or the Bengal School of Tantra exercised its jurisdiction over a vast region extending from Nepal to Orissa. This region was known as the *Viṣṇukrāntā* circle. The term, *Viṣṇukrāntā*, perhaps signified the Tāntrika recognition of the popularity of the worship of Viṣṇu throughout the region.[1] *Kaulikarcaṇadīpikā*, a 'left' Tāntrika work on 'circle-worship', which was written by a *Pāścātya Vaidika* Brāhmaṇa named Jagadānanda Śarmaṇ, avers that the Tantra of the *Gauḍamārga* was in vogue in as many as eighteen countries.[2]

Vṛndāvana Dāsa, too, mentions the popularity of Tāntrika forms of worship in Navadvīpa.[3] Various places in Navadvīpa, associated with Tāntrika worship, are mentioned in *Navadvipamahimā*.[4] Folk-cults like the Vāsulī and Caṇḍī worship were deeply influenced by Śaiva-Śākta rituals. The worship of Manasā, for instance, included the worship of Mahādeva.[5] The three most popular folk-cults were those of Manasā, Caṇḍī and Dharma. Vipradāsa wrote his work, *Manasāvijaya* towards the end of the

1. Govindagopāl Mukhopādhyāya, "Tantras in Bengal", *International Sanskrit Conference*, ed. Raghavan, Vol. I, 1975, pp. 80-87.
2. *Kaulikārcaṇadīpikā* ed. Rasikmohan Chottopādhyāya, p. 17 :
   "Nepāladeśamārabhya Kalingānta Maheśvarī |
   Aṣṭādaśaṣu Deśeṣu Gauḍamārgah Prakīrtitah ||"
3. CBH. p. 12.
4. By Kānti Chandra Rāḍi, pp. 68-86.
5. For Mahādeva worship during *Manasāpujā*, vide, *Manasāpūjāpaddhati*, ed. Hemacandra Sāhityavinoda, pp. 43-44.

fifteenth century. The worshippers of Manasā regarded the goddess as a rival of Caṇḍī. The goddess was no hydra-headed monster though she was the presiding deity of the snakes. There is some cogency in the argument that once Caṇḍī, Manasā and Lakṣmī were a single goddess. Much later they acquired separate and antagonistic identities owing mainly to priestly rivalry.[1]

The earliest mention of Mangalcaṇḍī is found in the *Bṛhaddharmapurāna*.[2] Like Manasā and Caṇḍī Mangalacaṇḍī, too, was a household goddess. Caṇḍī was worshipped as the deity of the people who cleared forests and who were engaged in trade and commerce.

The nature of the Dharma cult is a subject of controversy. In Bankura Dharma was represented by a piece of stone. The cult-priests belonged to the untouchable caste of the Doms. According to Haraprasād Śāstrī, Dharma was a sort of local, 'folk'-Buddha. S.C. Ray regarded him as Sūrya. Suniti Kumer Chatterji thought that Dharma was *Kurma* (Tortoise).[3] He was, according to K.P. Chatterji, ancient Varuṇa. Āshutosh Bhattachārya thinks that he was the god of the "primitive Sun-cult".[4] Bhattachārya also determines the boundary of the Dharma cult in the following manner :[5]

> "In the north up to Birbhum; in the east up to the Bhāgirathi river; in the south up to Ghātāl and Midnāpur, and in the west up to Puruliā."

It is interesting to note that the known exponents of the Caṇḍī worship were all Brāhmaṇas.[6] The popularity of these cults

1. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itikās*, I, I, p. 226 f.
2. *Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa*, p. 210: verse beginning with *Tvaṃ Kālaketuvaradā etc.*
3. *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Bankura.* Appendix A to Ch. III. Views discussed in pp. 210-217.
4. Ibid., pp. 217-218.
5. Ibid., p. 207.
6. e.g., Mānik Gāṅguli, Mukundarām, Rāmeśvara, Rūparāma were Brāhmaṇa poets of the Śiva and Caṇḍī cults. Both Sukumar Sen and Suniti Kumar Chatterji were of opinion that the Dharma cult was not a relic of Buddhism. See, Sukumar Sen: "Is the Cult of Dharma a Living Relic of Buddhism in Bengal?" and S. K. Chatterji: "Buddhist Survivals in Bengal" in *B. C. Law Volume*, I, pp. 75-87, 669-674; According to Sen, Dharma was either a Sun-God, or a warrior-God. Chatterji admits that Dharma cult might have been influenced by Buddhist rituals.

signified the filtration of non-Vedic rituals into Brāhmaṇical forms of worship. These popular cults did not endanger the stability of the caste-based social order. So, at least some of the *Smārtas* accorded recognition to them. Jīmūtavāhana and others (excluding Raghunandana) recognised the validity of the saturnalian *Savarotsava*.[1] Raghunandana and Govindānanda recognised the validity of the worship of Manasā, Mangalcaṇḍī, Aranyaṣaṣṭhī, and *vratas* like the *Kukkutīmarkatī*, *Sutikāṣaṣṭhī* and *Pipitakī*.[2]

Momtazur Rahaman Tarafdar suggests that the Brāhmaṇas were compelled by economic pressure to grant recognition to these popular un-Brāhmaṇical cults.[3] But why did the *Smārtas*, then, forbid the Brāhmaṇas to act as the priests of the plebeian Śūdras?[4] At least the Dharma cult had priests who belonged to the so-called untouchable castes.

The *Smārta* recognition of some of the un-Vedic cults reflected their popularity. Secondly, these cults did not challenge the social or ritual supremacy of the Brāhmaṇas, or the Brāhmaṇical priests. Thirdly, the Brāhmaṇical recognition of some of these cults probably signified a half-hearted attempt on the part of the Brāhmaṇas to establish some sort of social integration of the Hindu castes and sects. The Vāsulī, Manasā and the Mangalacaṇḍī worshippers "sanskritized" these goddesses by attributing to them the omnipotence of the Brāhmaṇical Durgā. The *Smārtas* also found no element in their worship which might be offensive to their moral ideas. Lastly, some of these cults were apparently musical cults and powerful media of mass entertainment. To accord recognition to them was perhaps an unavoidable social necessity. But the *Smārtas* like Raghunandana also felt that multiplication of such cults must be stopped. They specifically mentioned the rituals in their *Nivandhas* which had received their sanction.

1. Jīmūtavāhana, *Kālaviveka*, p. 33; Śūlapāṇi, *Durgotsavaviveka*, p. 24; Śrināth Ācarya Cuḍāmaṇi, *Durgotsavaviveka*, p. 51; Govindānanda, *Varṣakṛyākaumudī*, pp. 377-78.
2. See the following section.
3. Momtazur Rāhaman Tarafdar, *Hussain Shahi Bengal*, p. 248.
4. *Kṛyākāṇḍavāridki* Vol. III, p. 697.

II

There is considerable strength in the argument of the biographers of Caitanya that his advent was a social necessity. Tāntrika *Kaulācāra*, with its orgiasticism of wine and flesh, was a challenge to the moral fabric of the Hindu society. In Tāntrika *Cakrapūjā* or 'Circle-Worship', caste was temporarily relegated to the background. Some Vaiṣṇavas also felt the necessity of liberating Kṛṣṇa worship from the clutches of the Tantras. Kṛṣṇānanda Āgamavāgīśa, who is believed to be a contemporary of Caitanya, wrote a big Tāntrika compendium called *Tantrasāra* which is still in use. In this work verses were quoted from two Vaiṣṇava Tāntrika works named *Bṛhatgautamīyatantra* and *Kramadīpikā* to prove the Tāntrika nature of the worship of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa and their consorts.[1]

The rightist forces in the Hindu society were represented by the *Smārta Paṇḍitas*. It is indeed true that Raghunandana consciously tried to make some of the *Smārta* regulations, prepared by his predecessors, flexible.[2] Both reformatory measures and extra-Vedic rituals were introduced. But the attitude of the *Smārtas*, including Raghunandana, was incorrigibly ritualistic. There was no escape from the rituals, some of which were quite expensive. The rituals had become a trade with vested interests. They also briddled individual freedom of worship. The singular fact was that the Sultānate of Bengal did not interfere with them. After the performance of so many rituals the Hindus could have little time for creating political trouble. The predominance of the Hindu rituals and the continuance of the Muhāmmadan autocracy were perhaps complementary developments. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja would have us believe that there was a good deal of understanding between the conservative Hindus of Navadvīpa and the Muhammadan Qāzi of the town.[3]

1. *Bṛhat Tantrasāra* (Basumatī Sāhitya Mandir), pp. 164, 166, 190-191.
2. Bhavatosh Bhattāchārya, "Raghunandana's Indebtedness to His Predecessors", JASB, 1953, XIV, 2, pp. 175-176.
3. CCM, (hereafter, when no ed. is mentioned, refer to the Sahitya Akademi ed.) pp. 93-94; also, CBH, p. 275.

There are different views about the date of Raghunandana. According to M.M. Chakravartī Raghunandana flourished between 1510 and 1565. P.V. Kane places him between 1490 and 1570.[1] According to Haraprasād Śāstrī Raghunandana's *Jyotiṣatattva* was completed in 1565.[2] Raghunandana was probably younger than Caitanya. But he was unquestionably the most representative *Smārta* of his time. He has been hailed as a social reformer and a liberal-minded sociologist.[3] He has also been depicted as the high priest of reaction.[4]

Another contemporary *Smārta* was Govindānanda, author of *Varṣakriyākaumudī*, which was completed in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.[5] Govindānanda's father, Gaṇapati Bhatta, was a *Pāścātya Vaidika* Brāhmaṇa of Bāgri village in Midnapur. He was a Vaiṣṇava astrologer.[6]

The works of Raghunandana and Govindānanda on rituals and rites show that they produced a benumbing effect. The rituals were multiplying, and the two *Smārtas*, along with others, felt the necessity of cataloguing them for general information. The monthly rituals, mentioned in Raghunandana's *Kṛtyatattva* are stated below:

Month	*Number of Rituals*	*Kṛtyatattva Reference*
Vaisākha.	3	pp. 1-4
Jyaiṣtha.	2	pp. 6-7
Āṣāḍa.	4	pp. 9-11
Śrāvaṇa.	2	pp. 11-12
Bhādra.	6	pp. 12-16
Āśvina.	3	pp. 16-17
Kārttika.	6	pp. 18-23
Mārgaśīrṣa.	1	p. 23
Pauṣa.	1	p. 24

1. P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. I, p. 419.
2. H. P. Śāstrī, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS.* etc. III, p. XXIV.
3. Benoykumar Sarkār, *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*, p. 615; Bāṇī Chakravartī, *Samājasaṃskāraka Raghunandana*, Intro.
4. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Padāvalī-Paricaya*, pp. 39-40; Bhūpendranāth Datta, *Vaiṣṇava Sāhitye Samājatattva*, p. 96.
5. *Varṣakriyākaumudī*, Intro. p. II; P. V. Kane, op. cit., pp. 414-415.
6. *Varṣakriyākaumudi*, Intro. p. III.

Month	*Number of Rituals*	*Kṛtyatattva Reference*
Māgha.	5	pp. 24-28
Phālguna.	1	pp. 28-29
Caitra.	8	pp. 29-38

Some of these rituals are also mentioned by Govindānanda in *Varṣakriyākaumudī*, e.g., *Akṣayatṛtīyā* (p. 246), *Anantavrata* (pp. 322-331), *Ambuvācī* (p. 283 f), *Araṇyaṣaṣṭhī* (pp. 278-79), *Durgāpūjā* (p. 399 f), *Kojāgara* (p. 453), *Janmāṣṭamī* (p. 309), *Daśaharā* (p. 279), *Manasāpūjā* (pp. 279, 296-298), *Mangalacaṇḍīpūjā*, (p. 552, stanza 18). Govindānanda's additions are *Kukkutīmarkatīvrata* (perhaps a local ritual of Midnapur), *Govindadvādaśī* (pp. 319 and 514), *Goṣthāṣṭamī* (p. 478), *Tālanavamī* (p. 320), *Vāsudevapūjā* (p. 182), *Nāgapancamī* (p. 378), *Pipitakīvrata* (p. 254 f), holy bath in the Brahmaputra river (p. 522), worship of Vāmaṇa (p. 321).

The rituals and rites mentioned in *Kṛtyatattva* and *Varṣakriyākaumudī* gradually multiplied to an almost unmanageable extent. There must have been in Raghunandana's and Govindānanda's time some men who did not at all like the multiplication of rituals. Some of the rituals like *Araṇyaṣaṣṭhī*, *Sarpapūjana*, *Dyūtapratipat*, *Madanatrayodaśī* (mentioned by Raghunandana), *Kukkutīmarkatīvrata*, *Pipitakīvrata* (mentioned by Govindānanda) were un-Vedic in character. Raghunandana's emphasis on *Śrāddha* was overwhelming; *Śrāddha* in any form was a costly affair. The Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa felt the necessity of putting a briddle on the rituals. The alternative proposed by them was unritualistic and personalized *bhakti* for a personal god.[1] Here we must note that the profession of the Brāhmaṇa priest was highly technical. It could not be easily mastered. The factor of time limited the priest's scope for maintaining a large clientele. But a *guru*, who preached 'devotion', and also denigrated the rituals, could easily build up a large 'practice', and become affluent. Innumerable disciples of both sexes received from him "*Mantra*" or "*Nāma*", and remained beholden to him as long as they lived.

1. In *Caitanyamangala*, Ādi-7, p. 9, Jayānanda wrote that the advent of Caitanya was necessary for the restoration of Brahmaṇical *dharma*: "*Dharmasaṃsthāpanā Hetu Yuga Avatāra*"|| In Ādi-5, pp. 7-8 he describes the effects of the *Kali*-age from the *Smārta* point of view. His idea is quite different from that of the other biographers.

III

Mainly two explanations have been given for the great influence of *Smṛti* in Bengal at the time of Caitanya's advent. The first is that the Muhammadan conquest of Bengal had greatly disturbed the Hindu society. Thousands upon thousands of Hindus had been converted into Muhammadanism. This development necessitated the compulsory obedience of all Hindus to the rituals and legal formulations of the *Smṛti*.[1]

The other explanation is that the *Smṛti*-writs were necessitated by the social corrosion caused by the prevalence of Tāntrika Buddhism and inter-caste sexual relation.[2]

It is interesting to note that the *Smārtas* do not even indirectly propose to set up any organisation or make any arrangement directed against Muhammadan proselytisation. They merely emphasize *Śuddhi* or purification. They do not propagate the necessity of preaching Hinduism among those who belonged to the fringe of the Hindu society. The only effective answer to Muhammadan proselytisation of the Hindu masses (if such proselytisation was really taking place) was to adopt an effective programme of Hindu proselytisation. But the intelligent Brāhmaṇas who wrote the *Smṛti* either lacked the courage to adopt that programme, or lacked the intelligence to think of it. Their whole purpose was to categorize, describe and multiply useless rituals. Raghunandana, however, stated certain easy rules for the "purification" of abducted Hindu women in *Prāyaścittatattva*. Similar rules were earlier stated in *Devala Smṛti*.[3]

Bengal had possibly fared better than South Bihar during the Turko-Afghan invasion.[4] The Muhammadans came

1. Debajyoti Burman, *Indo-Muslim Relations*: pp. 48-52; Bāṇī Chakravartī, op. cit. intro. pp. 11-12; Ramesh Chandra Bandyopādhyāya, *Prācīn Bāṅglā Sāhitye Hindu Musalman*, pp. 1-10; Benoy Ghosh, ed., *Sāmayika Patre Bāṅglār Samājcitra*, Vol. II, p. 12 (editorial comment).
2. Dīnesh Chandra Sen, *History of Bengali Literature*, ed. 1954, pp. 208-209.
3. *Prāyaścittatattva*, p. 196.
4. Conclusion of Suniti Kumar Chatterji, ODBL, I, pp. 209-210.

to Bengal at a time when she possessed a cultural basis. The Sultāns of Delhi (1227-1341), the Iliās Shāhi kings (1342-1413), 'Gaṇeśa'-Jālāl-ud-din (1414-1441), again the Iliās Shāhi kings (1442-1487), the Hābsi rulers (1487-1493), and then Sultān Husain Shāh (1493/94-1519) are not known to have made any attempt to destroy either Bengali language or Bengali 'mentality'. In the absence of reliable statistical information it is very difficult to measure the depth of Muhammadan proselytisation in Bengal from the beginning of the thirteenth century to the end of the fifteenth.[1]

There are, however, some records of the oppression of the Hindus by the Muhammadans. In *Caitanyamangala* Jayānanda gives some detail about the tyranny and delinquency of some Muhammadans of Bengal.[2] The people in general suffered because of the tyrannical behaviour of the local officers of Husain Shāhi government. This fact is revealed in the Hāsān-Husain episode in Vijaya Gupta's *Manasāmangala*.[3] It has also been clearly stated by Barbosa that the Hindus of the upper castes were regularly embracing Islām with a view to receiving favour from the ruling Muhammadans.[4] He also recorded the fact that Moorish slave-traders purchased Hindu boys. Mahuan, the Chinese traveller, mentions the fact that Bengali and Persian were in use in Bengal in the fifteenth century.[5]

It must also be noted that conversion of the Hindus into Muhammadanism was far more widespread in East Bengal than in other parts of Bengal mainly because the Hindu low castes

1. Benoykumar Sarkār, *Bānglāya Deśivideśī*, pp. 21-22.
2. *Caitanyamangala*, Nadīyā-4, pp. 13-14.
3. *Manasāmangala*, pp. 54-62; also, *Manasāvijaya*, pp. 63-82.
4. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol. II, pp. 147-148.
5. Ibid. p. 147; Mahuan's account in *Viśvabhāratī Annals*, 1945. Vol, I, pp. 117. See also, Rokeya Kabir, "Sultans of Bengal: Charge of Religious Intolerance", *Nalinīkānta Bhattasālī Commemoration Volume*, Dacca Museum, Dacca. 1966. For a detailed discussion of Hindu-Muslim relations in the middle ages, see, Jagadīsh Nārāyaṇ Sarkār, "Madhyayugīya Bānglāya Hindu-Musalmān Saṃparka", *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, B. E. 1388 (1981) No. I, pp. 1--70.

and the Buddhists of East Bengal could no longer tolerate the Brāhmaṇical reaction. They were attracted by the liberal social philosophy of Muhammadanism.[1]

The Muhammadans admittedly converted the low-caste Hindus. But according to a recent estimate, in 1650 or thereabouts there were in Bengal 8.6 million Hindus and 4.1 million Muslims.[2] Even after conversion into Muhammadanism the masses in East Bengal remained culturally or mentally Hindu or Buddhist. "They carried on the native Bengali traditions in literary and other matters."[3] The population became polarized into antagonistic competing Hindu and Muslim communities only after the Muslims of Bengal were influenced by the communalist propaganda of the Wahabis and the separatist tendency in Muslim politics after 1880.

Some upper-class Hindus in North and West Bengal embraced Islam with a view to receiving favour from the ruling Muhammadans. But it is very difficult to prove on the strength of historical evidence that millions of Hindus and Buddhists were forced to accept Islam as their religion. There is hardly any reliable record of any attempt made by the Muhammadans to convert entire masses in the fifteenth century and afterwards. The Chinese traveller Wang Ta-yuan found life in pre-Caitanya Bengal tranquil. He witnessed extensive reclamation of bush-covered land.[4] Another Chinese traveller described Bengal as rich and civilised.[5] Even Vipradāsa's description of the Brāhmaṇical society

1. J. P. Wise held the view that until the Census of 1872 it was not known that the Muhammadans predominated in Eastern Bengal. Wise thought that a great number of Hindus were converted during the reign of Jālāl-ud-din (1414-1430). He attributed many of the conversions to "a desire to avoid punishment for murder or caste-offences", and to the egalitarian appeal of Muhammadanism. *Bengal District Gazetteers, Mymensingh*, E. A. Sachse, 1917, p. 36.
2. E. C. Dimock, "Hinduism and Islam in Mediaeval Bengal", in *Aspects of Bengali History and Society*, ed. Rachel van M. Baumer, p. 10.
3. ODBL, I, pp. 208-209; E. C. Dimock, *ut supra*, p. 6.
4. *Viśvabhāratī Annals*, 1945, I, P. 99.
5. Ibid. p. 127.

of the Saptagrāma region indicates that it was affluent.[1] The only shortcoming which might have made the Brāhmaṇas feel disappointed was that, excepting Rājā Gaṇeśa, the aforementioned Sultāns did not patronise Sanskrit and the Sanskrit scriptures. Haraprasād Śāstri wrote: "Forty years of search for Sanskrit MSS. have not enabled me to get even a MS. copied in Musalman Bengal during the 13th and 14th centuries. Patronage of Sanskrit in the fifteenth century began with (Gaṇeśa-Jālāluddin)....."[2]

It is therefore unreasonable to think that the whole thrust of the mediaeval Bengali *Smṛti* was against Muhammadanism, or that it was re-interpreted by scholars like Raghunandana only with a view to saving the Hindus from Muhammadan proselytisation. If the *Smārtas* really desired the integration of the Hindus, they would not have put so much stress on the distinction between Brāhmaṇas and other castes.

There were, on the other hand, some Muslims who dreamt of a Hindu-Muslim cultural synthesis. They felt that Islamic ideas, combined with Hindu elements, would appeal to the minds of the local Muhammadans to whom Hindu mythology was already known. This psychology seems to explain the acceptance, by Muslim mystic poets like Sayid Sultan, of *Avatāravāda* and Yogic-Tāntrika ideas of *Ṣatcakra* as integral parts of their philosophy.[3]

As for the second explanation of Dīnesh Chandra Sen, the question if Hindu Tāntrika ideas and practices were really better than the ideas and practices of Tāntrika Buddhism may be raised. The *Śaktisaṃgamatantra*, which was probably written in the second half of the sixteenth century[4], contained some very offensive words and descriptions. The *Tārākhaṇḍa* of this work had to be severely bowdlerized by its editor. One may attempt a comparison between the two forms and two sets of rituals but

1. *Manasāvijaya*, edited Sukumār Sen, ASB p. 142-143. 36 castes are mentioned in Viṣṇupāla's *Manasāmangala* ed. Sukumār Sen, 1968, pp. 52-53.
2. *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, Vol. III. Preface, p. xx.
3. Momtazur Rahaman Tarafdar, op. cit., p. 225.
4. The date of its composition, according to B. Bhattāchārya was 1581 A. D. *Śaktisaṃgama Tantra*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Vol. I, p. VII.

never between the two spirits. Having common aims, they resemble each other more than they differ from each other. The 'left' *Kaula*-Tāntrika and the Buddhist *Sahajiyā* pursued common aims. Inter-caste sexual relations are mentioned in the *Kulaji* literature which is considered unreliable by sober historians.[1] Jīmūtavāhana, however, even went so far as to advise the fathers to allot some property to their bastard sons.[2]

Vṛndāvana Dāsa's account makes it clear that the *Smārtas* of Navadvīpa and their patrons put up a united front against the Caitanya movement. No such united front was put up against the aforementioned popular cults. The tradition in Bangal was to formulate laws and rules mainly for the benefit of the Brāhmaṇas. The Śudras and the common people did not matter at all. They were written mainly for the guidance of the elite. Once the Smārtas regarded the Tāntrika sects as non-Vedic and non-Brāhmaṇical. But the *Upapurāṇas* were deeply influenced by Tantra, and the *Smārtas* were deeply influenced by the *Upapurāṇas*.[3] Raghunandana accepted the validity of Tāntrika *dīkṣā* or initiation, and composed a tract on the *Durgāpūjā* ceremony.

It is interesting to note that *Smārtas* like Raghunandana and Govindānanda were far more concerned with the specific rituals of Vaiṣṇava worship than with the principle or philosophy of that worship. They do not show any clear evidence of their acquaintance with the doctrine of *bhakti*. Govindānanda mentions the *Goṣṭhāṣṭamī* festival which was later accepted as a ritual by the the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.[4] He, however, described many *Tāntrika* Vaiṣṇava ceremonies in *Varṣakriyākaumudī*.[5] *Bhakti* was infused into the Vaiṣṇava rituals described in *Haribhaktivilāsa*.

The Brāhmaṇa *Smārtas* merely wanted to strengthen the social

1. *History of Bengal* (Dacca University), ed. R. C. Majumder, I, pp. 630-633; Nihār Ranjan Ray, *Bāngālir Itihās*, pp. 263-265.
2. Suresh Chandra Bandyopādhyāya, *Smṛtiśāstre Bāngālī*, p. 204.
3. S. C. Hāzra, *Studies in Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, p. 250; this view is not accepted by Suresh Chandra Bandyopādhyāya, op. cit., p. 199. But Hāzra's arguments and data cannot be seriously challenged,
4. *Varṣakriyākaumudī*, p. 478.
5. Ibid. 102-104.

and economic position of the Brāhmaṇas. The *Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa* mentions the ascendancy of the Śūdras, some of whom had gained universal respect as religious teachers.[1] Since the time of 'Gaṇeśa'-Jālāl-ud-din (1414-1441), the Kāyasthas had been steadily gaining a commanding position in bureaucracy, economic affairs, and social relations.[2] They constituted the landed aristocracy in Bengal during the rule of the kings of the Husain Shāhi dynasty.[3] At the end of the sixteenth century Abul Fazal found many of the Bengal *zamindārs* in the different *sircars* of Bengal to be Kāyasthas.[4]

The growth of the Kāyastha intelligentsia and the appearance of big and powerful Kāyastha landlords must have definitely enfeebled the social position of the Brāhmaṇas. Raghunandana, therefore, wrote that there were only two castes, namely, Brāhmaṇa and Śūdra.[5]

The Kāyasthas were, of course, Śūdras. For the Śūdras Raghunandana and the contemporary *Smṛti* writers prescribed only a few rights.[6] A Brāhmaṇa, according to Śrīkṛṣṇa Tarkālaṃkāra, might even commit adultery with a Śūdra woman with unquestionable impunity.[7] But a Śūdra was to be severely penalised if he married a Brāhmaṇa woman. The Śudras, including the Kāyasthas and the Vaidyas, had no right to utter any Vedic *mantra*. They had only the duty to bow down to the feet of the Brāhmaṇa, and 'serve' him.[8] A Śūdra, including a Kāyastha and a Vaidya, could

1. *Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa*, II, Ch. 19, verses 9-10, 12-14, 16.
2. Sukumār Sen, *Madhyayuger Bānglā O Bāngālī*, pp. 15-16.
3. Momtazur Rahaman Tarafdar, op. cit., p. 158.
4. *Āin-i-Ākbari*, Trans. H. S. Jarrett, ed. J. N. Sarkar, Vol. II, pp. 143, 145.
5. Raghunandana, *Aṣṭāviṃśatītattvāni* "Śūdrāṇhikācāratattvaṃ", ed. Beṇīmādhav De, Calcutta, n. d. pp. 441, and also "Śuddhitattva", p. 356.
6. The varius taboos prescribed for the Śūdras are catalogued in *Kriyākāṇḍavāridhi*, ed. Satish Chandra Mukhopādhyāya, Basumati Press, 2nd ed. Vol. I, pp. 6-7.
7. Bāṇī Chakravartī, op. cit., pp. 147-148; 249-251.
8. Ibid, pp. 147-148. Śrīnātha held the view that the Śūdras had the right to utter mantras. But this view was rejected by Raghunandana and Govindānanda. Wrote Raghunandana: "*Tuṣṇīmeva hi Śūdrasya Sanamangkārakaṃ Mataṃ...Pancayajne' pi Śūdrasya Dvijāśuśruṣā Tayā Jīvanavān Bhavet...Iti Namaskāramātra Vidhānaṃ.*" "Śūdraṇhikācāratattvaṃ" op. cit., p. 504.

not be a *Guru* or preceptor.[1] A Śūdra could worship only Śiva or Gopāla.[2] In ordinary circumstances a Brāhmaṇa might not accept any gift from a Śūdra or Kāyastha.[3] In ordinary circumstances he could not even act as a priest of the Śūdra or Kāyastha.[4] Even Ramesh Chandra Datta, I.C.S., a Kāyastha of Rāmbāgan, Calcutta, was severely taken to task by some Brāhmaṇical purists for his translation of the *Ṛkveda* into Bengali.[5] The *Smārtas* imposed almost similar restrictions on women belonging to all castes, including the Brāhmaṇas.[6] The apologists for *Smṛti* have utterly failed to explain how such misanthropic writs, rules and injunctions, prepared by the *Smārtas*, might "protect" Hindu society from the Muhammadan impact.

IV

Vṛndāvana Dāsa, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, and the poets of the anthology titled *Gaurapadataraṅginī* very often refer to a group of people whom they call *Pāṣaṇḍi* (roughly, philistine), and who are said to have organised a big opposition to the dissemination of *bhakti*. These so-called *Pāṣaṇḍis* were mostly professors of Hindu Law, Sanskrit grammer, and a philosophical system known as *Navyanyāya* or New Logic. *Navyanyāya* was first invented in Mithilā by Udaya-

1. *Kriyākāṇḍavāridhi*, Vol. I, "Dīkṣāprakaraṇa", pp. 6-7.
2. Ibid. "Vaiṣṇavācāraprakaraṇa", pp. 527-528; "Śaivācāraprakaraṇa", p. 561.
3. Ibid. "Prāyaścittavyāvasthāprakaraṇa", pp. 654-655, 681, 691,
4. Ibid. Vol. III, pp. 696-697.
5. The translation was regarded by Śaśadhar Tarkacūḍāmaṇi as an "inconceivable desecration of the Vedas". Review article in *Bangabāsī* (Daily Newspaper), Bhādra 7, 1885.
6. The independence of women was not recognised by the Bengali *Smārtas*. The *Dāyabhāga* of Jīmūtavāhana does not recognise the right of the widow to sell or mortgage her property. The women could have only "property", in a very narrow sense of the term. Most of their property were merely gifts. *Raghunandana, however, wrote that the Suttee was unfashionable. He advised the widows to practise various austerities.* Bāṇī Chakravartī, op. cit., pp. 237f; Suresh Chandra Bandyopādhyāya, *Smṛtiśāstre Bāngālī*, pp. 181-182, 190-191. Austerities are prescribed by Raghunandana in "Śuddhitattva", op. cit. p. 345.

nācārya in about 1326. It was developed by nearly thirty scholars of Mithilā between A.D. 1430 and 1500. *Navyanyāya* theories were also cultivated by many Bengali scholars. We do not know how these theories came to Bengal from Mithilā. The first Bengali scholar who achieved far-flung fame as an exponent of various philosophical systems, including *Navyanyāya*, was the celebrated scholar Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, who became a follower of Caitanya in Puri.[1]

The perfect method and technique of *Navyanyāya* "may be compared with highly advanced Mathematics".[2] It had a very difficult and complex system of terminology. Its analysis was unbelievably subtle. Hair-splitting arguments formed its basis. *Navyanyāya* was thoroughly realistic. But it was quite different from the atheistic doctrines. Actually it proposed theism.[3] The style of *Navyanyāya* is elliptical; the highest stage in the argument and the basic proposition were not linked by well-defined stages. *Navyanyāya* sounds like gibberish when it is translated into English. Peculiar expressions, such as, "contradicted contradictoriness" (for the term, *Prativādhyaprativandhakabhāva*), "qualifierness", "qualificandness", "absenceness", "knowledgeness" have been used in English renderings of *Navyanyāya* tracts.[4]

The system of *Navyanyāya* appeared to Ward as "a system

1. Dīnesh Chandra Bhattāchārya, *Bāngālīr Sārasvat Avadān*: *Bange Navyanyāya Carcā*, I, pp. 1-78
   Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma is said to have composed a thousand verses on Caitanya. This work, which is still to be discovered, was titled *Caitanyasahasra*. It is mentioned by Jayānanda in *Caitanyamangala*. Adi-1, p. 41 verses 63-64. Eight of the Sārvabhauma's verses, found in the Dacca University collection, are quoted by S. K. De: *Bengal's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature and Studies in Bengal Vaiṣṇavism*, pp. 104-108. Sārvabhauma also wrote verses on Nityānanda: p. 104. "Caitanayāṣṭakaṃ" was published with Bengali translation in *Gaurāngamādhurī*, 1928, 1929, vols. 1-2.
2. D. C. Guha, *Navyanyāya System of Logic*, Bhāratiya Vidyābhavan, Vārāṇasī, 1968, p. 3.
3. Ibid., p. 7.
4. See, D. H. H. Ingalls, *Materials for the Study of Navyanyāya Logic*, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 40, for many such terms.

of wrangling and contention about names and terms, very similar to what is related respecting the Stoics". According to E. B. Cowell, *Navyanyāya* was "a most refined system of logomachy, far surpassing in subtlety and ingenuity all the scholastic disputations of mediaeval Europe." A.B. Keith described this logical system as "a vast mass of perverted ingenuity worthy of the most flourishing days of mediaeval scholasticism".[1] Ten verses on the subject of *Naiyāyikanindā* or the criticism of the masters of logic have been collected in *Subhāṣitaratnabhāṇḍāgāraṃ*. The first verse is unprintable.[2]

Scholastic *Navyanyāya* utterly failed to stimulate the spirit of investigation beyond strictly prescribed limits. Science was a closed book to the *Navyanyāya* scholars, many of whom were exceptionally talented Brāhmaṇas. *Navyanyāya* found no justification for emotional *bhakti*. But they evidently found justification for the Brāhmaṇical *Smṛti*. There is hardly any evidence of neo-logical objection to the social and religious domination of the Brāhmaṇas, which had been established by the *Smṛti*. Moreover, many professors of *Navyanyāya* also wrote *Smṛti-tracts*.[3] It is also admitted that no *Paṇḍita* could hope to write a *Smṛti-nivandha* in a convincing manner if he had no idea of *Navyanyāya* logic. Both *Smṛti and Navyanyāya* represented two related aspects of Brāhmaṇical culture.

V

At the time of Caitanya's advent Navadvīpa was the greatest intellectual centre of Bengal. There is some confusion about the original position of the Navadvīpa town of the sixteenth century. It is believed that much of Caitanya's Navadvīpa has been washed away by the Ganges. But there is no doubt about the intellectual pre-eminence of the town. Saptagrāma was the principal river-port, almost adjacent to the 'university town' of

1. Opinions quoted by Dīnesh Chandra Bhattāchārya, op. cit. p. 315.
2. *Subhāṣitaratnabhāṇḍāgāraṃ*, p. 43.
3. Dīnesh Chandra Bhattāchārya, op. cit. pp. 264, 338-339.

Navadvīpa.[1] Vṛndāvana Dāsa gives us a rough idea of the caste-composition of Navadvīpa town at the time of Caitanya's advent. He mentions different areas of the city where lived various low-caste people.[2] These people were the conch-shell makers, sellers of grocery-goods, flower-sellers, weavers, milktraders, and betel-nut traders (*Śānkhāri, Mālākār, Tānti, Goālā, Gandhavaṇik, Tāmbulī*). There were men who belonged to the caste of *Vādyakara* or Drummers,[3] the doctors who attended cases of snake-bite (*Mālovaidya*),[4] the *Bhāts* or panegyrists, the *Vaṇiks* or merchants, and the Muhammadans.[5]

The Brāhmaṇas were in a dominant position. The greater the reputation of a Brāhmaṇa *paṇḍita*, the longer was his student roll. The Vaidyas and the Kāyasthas, regarded as Śūdra by Raghunandana, formed the moneyed class. Most of them were bureaucrats. A few of the Brāhmaṇas were landlords and officials. But there were also different classes of Brāhmaṇas. The main categories were the *Kulīnas* and the *Śrotriyas*. Many *Vaidika* Brāhmaṇas, who were both professors and priests, lived in the town. Poor Brāhmaṇas might eke out a living by trade. Śrīdhara, a Brāhmaṇa, was a vegetable-seller. Marriage in Brāhmaṇa families was conditioned by *Gotra, Mela and Gāin*. Both the *Raḍī* and the *Vaidika* Brāhmaṇas were the social leaders. The Vārendra Brāhmaṇas do not seem to have been in a predominant position.[6] The majority of the people belonged to the non-Brāhmaṇical castes and did not enjoy any social privilege. No liberal social philosophy could possibly evolve in a society which

1. The great affluence of Saptagrāma is described by Vipradāsa, *Manasāvijaya*, pp. 142-143; Ralph Fitch, *Purchas His Pilgrims*, X, p. 182; Caesar Frederick, Ibid, X, p. 114. In the middle of the 16th. century the river-port near Saptagrāma dried up. Rennell described Saptagrāma in 1788 as "an inconsiderable village". *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan*, 1792, 2nd. ed. p. 57.
2. CBH. I, Ch. 10, pp. 69-75; *Gaurāngavijaya*, pp. 30-31.
3. CBH. pp. 92-93.
4. CBH. pp. 102-103.
5. CBH. pp. 94, 145. These 'Professional Castes' of Navadvīpa are also mentioned by Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa: *Gaurāngavijaya*, pp. 30-31.
6. CBH. I Ch. 2, pp. 9-18; II, Ch. 9, pp. 179-187.

was dominated by a particular caste, or the caste of the Brāhmaṇas. Social relations were atrophied. Society itself was moribund, not because of the political domination of the Muhammadans, but owing to the Brāhmaṇa monopoly of social power and privilege.

In *Manasāmangala* Vijayagupta refers to compact groups of Brahmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiṣyas, Śūdras and Muslim weavers, and others with 'functional' castes, which existed in the village.[1] The compactness of the caste groups is hinted at in the *Caitanyabhāgavata*. This meant that Hindu society in Caitanya's time consisted of groups of people which were possibly segregated from one another not only in the villages but also in the towns.

Regardless of caste, Hindu women were merely "scullery maids" and reproductive machines. Their individuality and independent position were not recognised in the *Smṛtis*. They had no right to participate in many religious ceremonies. According to the *Dāyabhāga* of Jīmūtavāhana the Hindu widow had no right to sell, mortgage, and gift away her property. But she was entitled to *Strīdhana* or a part of the property or wealth bequeathed by her father or husband.[2] Raghunandana, however, approved of divorce in case of the pregnancy of the wife caused by her cohabitation with a low-caste man, or with a relative.[3] *Satī* was not compulsory. Raghunandana's liberalism consisted mainly in his attempt to show that the practice of widow-burning was not recognised as a 'regular' custom in the ancient Hindu scriptures.[4] But he prescribed *brahmacarya* or abstinence for the widow, which was tantamount to the practice of severe austerities.[5] The wealth of the rich was lavishly spent in

1. *Manasāmangala*, pp. 4, 59-61.
2. Suresh Chandra Bandyopādhyāya, *Smṛtiśāstre Bāngāli*, pp. 181-82, 190-91.
3. *Aṣṭāviṃśatitattvāni*, "Śūddhitattva", p. 361.
4. Ibid., p. 345; *Angirāvacane 'Yā Nārī' Ityupādānāt Sahamaraṇabhāvāpakṣo' pi Sūcitah.*
5. Ibid., p. 345: *Mṛte Bhartari Tadanvarohaṇaṃ veti. Brahmacaryaṃ Maithunavarjanaṃ Tāmbulādivarjanaṃca.* He prescribes *Ekāhāra. Gandhadravyavarjana. Tarpaṇa.* etc.

marriages and other ceremonies.[1] Consequently priesthood was a good, lucrative trade. Moral degradation was rampant. Tarafdar thinks that it was caused by Muslim concubinage and 'Tantricism'.[2] Even some of the Brāhmaṇas were scoundrels. Jagāi and Mādhāi, two notorious scoundrels of Navadvīpa, were Brāhmaṇas. Superstition was considerably strengthened by the *Smṛti*-writers who prescribed various rituals like *Śantisvastayana* against ill-luck and disease. It was also strengthened by the astrologers and practitioners of black magic. Even Raghunandana discusses what he regards as 'divine' evidence in *Divyatattva*.[3]

The rigidity of the caste-system, the cultural and social alienation of large segments of the Hindu population by the short-sighted Brāhmaṇas, the utter selfishness of Hindu aristocracy—these, to some extent, favoured the conversion of the low-caste Hindus into Muhammadanism. North and East Bengal fell an easy prey to Islam. The Tibeto-Burmese tribes were probably converted by Arab missionaries stationed in Chittagong.[4] The rigidity of the caste system made the lower castes extremely vulnerable to Muhammadan proselytisation. The hostility of the low castes to the iniquities of the caste system is powerfully expressed in such writings as *Niranjaner Uṣmā* or Wrath of Niranjana.[5]

VI

There were some men in Navadvīpa in the fifteenth century who desired both religious and social synthesis. To them the old concept of *bhakti* was the only panacea. Vṛndāvana Dāsa often

1. CBH, p. 36: *Jagat Pramatta Dhanaputravidyā Rase| Dekhile Vaiṣṇavamātra Save Upahāse||...Tare Vale Sukṛti Je Dolāghoḍā Caḍe|Daśaviśajana Jāra Āgepāśe Cale|| Dehagehavyātirikta Āra Nāhi Sphūre|| Kṛṣṇayātrāmahotsavaparva Nāhi Kare| Vivāhādi Karme Se Ānanda Kari Mare||*
2. Momtazur Rahaman Tarafdar, op. cit., p. 336.
3. *Aṣṭāvimśatitattvāni*, Ch. 19.
4. ODBL, pp. 208-209.
5. *Śuṇyapurāṇa*, pp. 332-33; *Dharmapūjāvidhāna*, pp. 219-220. According to this legend Lord Niranjana and his cohorts persecuted the Hindus in the garb of predatory Muhammadans.

refers to the lack of *bhakti* in Hindu society. Sanskrit scholars and Brāhmaṇas studied the Vaiṣṇava mythologies and the *Gītā*. But they interpreted these works mainly from the ritualistic point of view, and remained indifferent to the devotional idea inherent in them.[1] This studied indifference to *bhakti* was very painful to those who believed in it. According to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition the *bhakta* (devoted) Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa were led by Advaita Ācārya, a Vārendra Brāhmaṇa, whose dates are still uncertain.[2] He was born, probably in the middle of the fifteenth century, in a place named Lāuḍ in far Sylhet. He came to Navadvīpa with his parents when he was only twelve. Advaita, a very learned man, became the disciple of an ascetic named Mādhavendra Purī, who was apparently a member of the order founded by Śankarācārya, but really a preacher and theoriser of *Kṛṣṇabhakti*.[3] Jagannātha Miśra, Caitanya's father, and Viśvarūpa, Caitanya's elder brother, who later renounced the world and became an ascetic, had pronounced Vaiṣṇava sympathies. In fact the Vaiṣṇava group in Navadvīpa was constituted by men most of whom hailed from Sylhet.[4] It would not, therefore, be an exaggeration to say that the origins of the Caitanya movement should be traced to Śrihatta or Sylhet.[5] But excepting the two copper plate inscrip-

1. CBH. p. 12: *Gītā Bhāgavata Ye Ye Janete Paḍaya| Bhaktira Vyākhyāna Nāhi Tāhara Jihvāya||*
2. According to a recent estimate Advaita Ācārya was born in 1454 and died in 1550. Advaita's eldest son was born in 1509. But these dates are hypothetical. Sukhamaya Mukhopādhyāya, *Madhyayuger Bānglā Sāhityer Tathya O Kālakrama*, p. 44,
3. Mādhavendra Purī has been described as an ascetic of Śankara's order. *Bhaktiratnāvalī*, Intro. p. III. Vṛndāvana Dāsa describes Advaita as Mādhavendra Purī's disciple: CBH, p. 362, *Mādhavendra Advaite Yadyapi Cheḍa Nāi| Tathāpi Tāhān Śiṣya Ācārya Gosāin.*
4. CBH, p. 10: Śrivāsa Paṇḍita, Śrī Rāma Paṇḍita, Chandraśekhara, Murāri Gupta, these four Vaiṣṇavas from Sylhet are particularly mentioned by Vṛndāvana Dāsa. Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi and Vāsudeva Datta of Chittagong are also mentioned. Thirteen other contemporary Vaiṣṇavas from Sylhet are mentioned in *Śrihatter Itivṛtta* Parts III and IV of *Uttarāmśa*. pp. 1, 29, 8, 39, 70, 72, 73, 83, 115, 149, 181, 226, 231.
5. This is the view of Khagendranāth Mitra, quoted in *Srihatter Lokasaṃgīt*, ed. Gurusadaya Datta and Nirmalendu Bhowmik, pp. 6-7.

tions issued in the thirteenth century by kings Govindakeśavadeva and Īśaṇadeva, and found in Bhāterā in Sylhet, there is no other direct or definite evidence of the prevalence of Vaiṣṇavism and Kṛṣṇa-worship in that district. It has been suggested that the Vaiṣṇavas of Mithilā "Āryanised" Kāmarūpa.[1] This suggestion is based on the evidence of the *Kālikāpurāṇa*. Being adjacent to Kāmarūpa, Sylhet might have been influenced by *Maithila* Vaiṣṇavism. Most probably it was Advaita, a disciple of Mādhavendra Purī,[2] who converted some men of Sylhet, then resident in Navadvīpa, into Vaiṣṇavism. In this work Advaita was helped by Īśvara Purī, another disciple of Mādhavendra Purī.[3]

The Navadvīpa Vaiṣṇavas did not at first disobey the *Smṛti*-rules. There is a collection of songs in *Gaurapadataranginī* which describe the rituals of Caitanya's birth, *Cuḍākaraṇa*, *Upanayana* and two consecutive marriages.[4] The tremendous influence of the *Smārtas* is fully revealed in these songs. But even though the Vaiṣṇavas led by Advaita were prepared to compromise with *Smṛti*, the *Smārtas* and the *Naiyāyikas* were not prepared to accept *bhakti* as the final solution of the spiritual and material problems. This rigid stand of the orthodox elements made Advaita very angry. He uttered imprecations against the philistines.[5] It was later believed that Caitanya was the personification of Advaita's determination to flush out blasphemy and philistinism.[6]

It is important to note that the Caitanya movement was sponsored mainly by the Brāhmaṇas. According to an estimate of Bimānbihārī Majumdar, of the four hundred and ninety

1. Jaidev Ganguli, op. cit. *Our Heritage*, January-June, 1962. Vol. X, part I, p. 51.
2. Mādhavendra Purī's initiative is described by Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa in *Gaurāngavijaya*, pp. 6-15.
3. īśvara Purī was born in Kumarāhatta in 24 Parganas. Bimānbiharī Majumdār, *Śrīcaitanyacariter Upādān*, p. 626.
4. *Gaurapadataranginī*, Ch. 2, pp. 36-76.
5. CBH., p. 13: *Śuniyā Advaita Krodhe Āgnihena Jvale| Digamvara Hai Sarva Vaiṣṇavere Bole|| Sava Uddhārive Kṛṣṇa Āpane Āsiyā|... Yave Nāhi Pāron Tave Ei Deha Haite| Prakāśiya Cāribhuja Cakra Laimu Hāte|| Pāṣaṇḍire Kātiyā Karimu Skandha Nāśa| Tave Kṛṣṇa Prabhu Mora Muin Tāra Dāsa||*
6. CBH., p. 12 : "*Advaitera Kāraṇe Caitanya Avatāra*"

followers of Caitanya, two hundred and thirty-nine were Brāhmaṇas.[1] The fact certainly indicates a great rift in the Brāhmaṇical society of the city of Navadvīpa and the adjoining areas. Quite a sizable section of the Brāhmaṇas must have found it both morally and economically difficult to maintain a barrier between themselves and the so-called Śūdras. It is interesting to note in this connection that even in other parts of India the Brāhmaṇas supported the Vaiṣṇava movements.[2] The inevitable conclusion is that the radical-minded Brāhmaṇas of Navadvīpa followed a good precedent set up by the Brāhmaṇas elsewhere in India. Govardhana and Hiraṇya, Śūdra *Majumdārs* of Saptagrāma,[3] and immensely rich, had a Brāhmaṇa priest who is said to have arranged Advaita's marriage.[4] The attachment of a Brāhmaṇa priest, who is said to have had some influence among the Brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa, to a Śūdra *Majumdār* signified the fact that at least some Brāhmaṇas were bold enough to flout the *smārta* rule against such avocation. A good number of the Navadvīpa Brāhmaṇas desired social mobility which was ultimately generated by the *bhakti* movement of Caitanya.

It should also be noted that the Brāhmaṇas who wanted a change found the ready-made ideology of *bhakti* in Śrīdhara Svāmin's commentary on the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. According to Dīnesh Chandra Bhattāchārya Śrīdhara Svāmin was a Bengali.[5] In his

1. *Sricaitanyacariter Upādān*: p. 567: There were 29 Kāyasthas, 37 Vaidyas, 2 Muslims and 16 "women".
2. See data in J. N. Bhattacharya: *Hindu Castes and Sects* Second ed, Calcutta: Editions Indian. 1968, pp. 37, 39, 41-42, 45, 53, 57, 58-65, 74, 78-79, 86
3. The *Majumdārs* "were contracting parties who used to paya fixed amount of tax to the royal treasury out of what was collected from the peasants. Within their estates these farmers possibly conducted the revenue administration as they pleased, sometimes making extortionate demands on the peasants. But the *majumdārs* had no right of hereditary succession to these estates". Momtazur Rahaman Tarafdar, op. cit., p. 109.
4. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 24, pp. 237-238; *Advaitamangala*, pp. 42-44; *Advaitaprakāśa*, p. 30.
5. "Śrīdharasvāmir Kulaparicaya O Kālanirṇaya", *Pravāsī* (Bengali Journal), Calcutta, Māgha, B. E. 1358 (1951), pp. 411-414

commentary on the *Gītā* Śrīdhara Svāmin equated Kṛṣṇa with Brahman. He interpreted *Māyā* as an attribute of Brahman. He did not believe in Śankara's theory of release as a state of cease-work. He believed that *bhakti* as a form of disinterested work was eternal. He stressed the importance of hymns and the singing of hymns. He was an ascetic of the *Kevalādvaita* order. Śrīdhara Svāmin was a worshipper of Nṛsiṃha.[1] Later some of the basic formulations of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism were taken from the commentaries of Śrīdhara Svāmin, namely, the *Suvodhini* commentary on the *Gītā*, the *Ātmaprakāśa* commentary on the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, and, most important, the *Bhāvārthadīpikā* commentary on the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. Caitanya himself is said to have regarded him as a *Jagad-guru* or Preceptor of the World.[2] The theory of *Bhakti* was also enunciated in two important works which were edited probably before Caitanya's advent. These were *Nāradabhaktisūtra*, and *Śāṇḍilyasūtra* to which Svapneśvara, a grandson of Vāsudeva Sārva-bhauma, added an excellent commentary.[3] The other important work on *bhakti* was *Bhaktiratnāvalī* of Viṣṇu Purī, who was an ascetic of Tirhut.[4]

There is an idea that the Sūfi mystics of the time influenced the development of Vaiṣṇava emotionalism and the Vaiṣṇava cult of love.[5] The Sūfi saint Nur-ud-din Abdur Rahaman Zami (1414-1492) was almost a contemporary of Caitanya. In all probability Advaita was acquainted with the viewpoint of the *Āuls* and *Bāuls*

1. Sundarānanda Vidyāvinod, *Gauḍīya Darśaner Itihās O Vaiśiṣṭa*, pp. 120 124. Śrīdhara Svāmin's date has been fixed between 1350 and 1450. P K. Goḍe, "Date of Śrīdharasvāmin, author of the Commentaries on the Bhāgavatapurāṇa and other works", *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. XXX, parts III, IV, pp. 277-283. See also "Vrajavihāra" in *Kāvyasaṃgraha* ed. Jivānanda Vidyāsagar Calcutta, 1872 pp. 59-64. This is supposed to have been writen by Śridharasvāmin.
2. CCM, p. 512: *Śrīdharasvāmir Prasāde Bhāgavata Jāni| Jagatguru Srīdharasvāmī Guru Kari Māni||*
3. *Bange Navyanyāyacarcā*, p. 43. Svapneśvara also wrote *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī*.
4. The *Bhaktiratnāvalī*, translated by A.B. Introduction.
5. Enamul Huq, *Bange Sūfi Prabhāva*, Calcutta, 1935, pp. 165-70, 171-178.

who were undoubtedly influenced by the Sūfi concept of mystic love.[1] *Hal* (ecstasy), *Dhikr* (recitation of the name of God) and *Sima* (religious gatherings where hymns are sung), all fundamental Sūfi concepts, may be regarded as the possible counterparts of Vaiṣṇava *Daśā* (ecstasy), *Kṛṣṇanāma* (recitation of the name of Kṛṣṇa) and *Kīrtana* (congregational singing of hymns). The Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava emphasis on love divine and its liberal attitude towards caste may be attributed to Sūfi influence. Muslim mystic poets like Sayyid Sultān desired a cultural synthesis. *Avatāravāda* and Yogic-*Tāntrika* ideas of *Ṣatcakra* were integral parts of his religious philosophy.[2]

But there is no evidence of any direct link between Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy and Sūfi mysticism. Caitanya had no contact with any Sūfi. He did not read Sūfi literature. Sūfi influence in Navadvīpa, a very prominent centre of Brāhmaṇical culture, is a debatable proposition. The Navadvīpa region constituted the homeland of Brāhmaṇical *Smṛti*, which put up a strong barrier between the Hindus and the Muslims.

1. Advaita composed verses in the language of the Bāuls: CCM, Kālnā ed. pp. 836-837.
2. Sayyid Sultān vividly described the sports of Kṛṣṇa in his *Nabivaṃśa*. Enamul Huq, *Muslim Bānglā Sāhitya*, Dacca, 1957, pp. 149-50.

CHAPTER III

THE CAITANYA LEGEND

I

Śrī Gaurānga or Śrī Caitanya was born in Navadvīpa in 1486 and died in mysterious circumstances in Purī. Among the biographers only Jayānanda wrote that Caitanya died of a wound in his left foot, caused by his dancing on a pile of bricks.[1] But even a highly reliable Vaiṣṇava scholar like Rādhāgovinda Nāth believes that Caitanya 'disappeard'.[2]

The historicity of the events of Caitanya's life as narrated by his biographers was discussed by Sushilkumār De and Bimānbihārī Majumder.[3] But many chronological lacunae still remained. Some of the important dates are as follows[4] :

1. Caitanya's birth : February 18, 1486
2. First Marriage : 1501-1502
3. Second Marriage : 1507
4. The beginning of the emotional stage : 1509
5. Renunciation of the world : 25-26 January, 1510
6. Journey to Purī : February 4, 1510
7. Commencement of the journey to the Deccan : April, 1510
8. Return to Purī : 1512
9. Journey to Vṛndāvana from Purī : 1515
10. Arrival at Allahabad : January, 1516
11. Arrival at Benaras : 1516
12. Return to Purī : May 1516
13. Death : June 29, 1533

Young and full of vitality, Caitanya did not interpret his renunciation of the world as a state of inactivity. For six years

1. Jayānanda, *Caitanyamangala*, "Śeṣakhaṇḍa", pp. 116-117.
2. Rādhāgovinda Nāth, *Śrī Śrī Caitanyacaritamṛter Bhūmikā*, 4th ed., p. 63.
3. Discussions in De's *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, and Mujumdār's *Śrī-caitanyacariter Upādān*.
4. Dates mentioned in *Madhyayger Bānglā Sāhityer Kālakram* (pp. 27-29) by Sukhamay Mukhopādhyāya.

after renouncing the world he travelled in the Deccan, western India and northern India. He visited the holy places in the Deccan and western India. He went to Vārānasī, Prayāga (Allahabad) and Vṛndāvana. At least four tribes of the Korāput district of Orissa still regard one Mahāprabhu (Great Lord) as their supreme God.[1] *Mahāprabhu* was Caitanya's honorific title. His 'name' might have been heard of by the tribal people. But the true history of Caitanya's wide travels is lost in an unending maze of conflicting legends.[2] It is also interesting to note that among the mediaeval leaders of the Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* movement only Madhva is said to have visited Bengal and Orissa.[3] Later the sect of Caitanya would claim that it was affiliated to the Mādhva order. At any rate Caitanya gathered valuable experience from his travels, which made him capable of giving his movement a wide base.

II

Historians of the Caitanya movement have derived their information chiefly from the biographical accounts of Murāri Gupta, Kavi Karṇapūra, Vṛndāvana Dāsa and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. The accounts of Locana, Jayānanda and Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa contain some data and explanations which are not found in the more authoritative texts mentioned above. But these accounts are mixed with numerous fables and legends.

There is considerable amount of information in the 1507 verses of the anthology titled *Gaurapadataranginī*. Excepting Bimānbihārī Majumdār, the historians have not systematically compared the information gleaned from the early biographies with the materials found in these songs. These verses were composed by one hundred and fifty-two poets, many of whom were Caitanya's contemporaries. Considered stricty from the historical point of view, these songs or

1. Verrier Elwin, *The Tribal Myths of Orissa*: The tribes which worship *Mahāprabhu* are Binjhwar, Bondo Highlanders, Gaḍabā and Pārengā. But the tribal *Mahāprabhu* is not a Vaiṣṇava.
2. The best accounts of these travels are given in Bimānbihārī Majumdār's *Śrīcaitanyacariter Upādān*, pp. 15-21, 215-221, 241-246, 354-365.
3. Surendranāth Dāsgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, IV, p. 94

hymns may not be deemed reliable. But the value of these songs consists in the minute delineation of characters and attitudes which may help us have an insight into the nature of the Caitanya movement as it developed in the urban setting of Navadvīpa.

In part II of this anthology there are one hundred and fifty songs which deal with the life of Caitanya from birth right up to the time of his second marriage with Viṣṇupriyā Devī. These songs do not refer to the death of Caitanya's father, or the renunciation of the world by his elder brother, Viśvarūpa. But the poets have not neglected the other important events.

The songs describing the events of the aforementioned period seem to put considerable stress on the purely ritualistic aspects of the events. The rituals of birth, *Cuḍākaraṇa*, *Upanayana* and marriage are fully described. The tremendous influence of the *Smṛti* is fully revealed in these songs. Jagannātha Miśra, Caitanya's father, is described as a conservative Brāhmaṇa who was very rich. But Vṛndāvana Dāsa describes him as a poor man struggling for existence.[1] Jagannātha Miśra had Vaiṣṇava sympathies; but he had to observe the caste-rituals.

It is said that Mālinī, wife of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and Sīta Devī, wife of Advaita Ācārya, two outstanding leaders of the Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa, offered the new born babe golden ornaments, silk, cosmetics, cooked food and sweet drinks.[2] The influence of the local astrologers was very great. According to astrological calculations Caitanya had the physiognomy of a genius even when he was a baby.[3] Locana Dāsa, who belonged to the group which worshipped Caitanya as a paramour, gives an interesting description of the fantastic beauty of the baby Caitanya.[4] Caitanya is described as a pampered child with a heavy load of golden ornaments.[5] The

1. CBH, p. 40 : *Sākṣātei Ei Kena Dekhanā Āmata/ Paḍiyāo Āmāra Kena Ghare Nāhi Bhāta.*
2. *Gaurapadataranginī*, pp. 39-40, songs 13 and 14.
3. Ibid., p. 41, song 15. The astrologer was Śacī Devī's father Nīlāmvara Chakravartī.
4. *Caitanyamangala*, Ādikhaṇḍa, p. 3: "*Viśāla Nitamva Ūru Kadalīra Yena/.. Alasala Anga Savāra Ślatha Nīvīvandha*" etc.
5. *Gaurapadataranginī*, p. 44, songs 1-3 of Vāsu Ghoṣa.

description of the beautiful baby was a new poetic development in contemporary Bengali literature.

After the disappearance of Viśvarūpa, Caitanya's father thought that excessive learning had made his eldest son so eccentric that he had carelessly renounced the world. So he decided to keep young Caitanya away from the schools. The boy was allowed to be a real truant. A time came when the boy himself demanded his right to education. So he was sent to school.[1] Caitanya learnt *Kalāpa* grammar, and listened to lectures on subjects like rhetorics. He had that keenness of intellect which might have helped him master some of the intricacies of *Navyanyāya*.[2] The biographers and the hymnologists, however, almost habitually described Caitanya as a brilliant scholar, and master of the traditional learning. According to a tradition current in Navadvīpa Caitanya and the celebrated *Naiyāyika* Raghunātha Śiromaṇi were fellow students of Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma.[3] But Raghunātha Śiromaṇi achieved fame as a scholar even before Caitanya's birth.[4] According to Īśāṇa Nāgara, Caitanya was a student of an institution run by Advaita Ācārya. In that school he was awarded the appellation of "Vidyāsāgara." It is said that Caitanya composed a commentary known as *Vidyāsāgarītīkā*.[5] Very probably these legends had no foundation in reality. But the songs in the *Gaurapadatarangiṇī* make it plain that Caitanya's education fully conformed to the current syllabi.

Caitanya's first marriage with Lakṣmī Devī was held when he was an adolescent. After this event Caitanya went to East Bengal.[6] During his sojourn in East Bengal, Lakṣmī Devī died of snake-bite. Sushilkumār De thinks that the first wife possibly "held a unique

1. CBH, pp. 35-42, 42-49.
2. CBH, pp. 42-49; Murāri Gupta merely says that Caitanya studied in the institutions of Viṣṇu Paṇḍita, Sudarśana Paṇḍita and Gangādāsa. Paṇḍita op. cit. p. 22, Canto 9, verse 1.
3. Īśāṇa Nāgara, *Advaitaprakāśa*, (A.C. Tattvanidhi ed.), Ch. 12, p. 118.
4. Dīnesh Chandra Bhattācārya, *Bāngālīr Sārasvat Avadān*, I, p. 94.
5. Īśāṇa Nāgara, op. cit. p. 126: The text on which this commentary is supposed to have been composed is not mentioned.
6. CBH, pp. 83-89: Murāri Gupta, op. cit. p. 29, Canto 11, verses 11-16.

place in his affection, and the shock of her death had something to do with his Sannyāsa".[1]

Caitanya's second marriage with Viśṇupriyā Devī is described in forty songs. Much emphasis is laid on the second marriage, and unfortunately no importance is attached to the tragic death of Lakṣmī Devī. Her father was a poor man.[2] Vṛndāvana Dāsa makes an allusion to the substantial dowry bestowed on Caitanya by Viṣṇupriyā's affluent father.[3] We do not know if the poets who attached a good deal of importance to Caitanya's marriage with Viṣṇupriyā were influenced by these facts.

The number of songs on Caitanya's physical beauty is one hundred and thirty. One hunderd and eighty songs describe the love the young women of Navadvīpa conceived for the beautiful hero. The situations described in these songs are often very indelicate. Vṛndāvana Dāsa, however, makes it very clear that Caitanya never looked at women. He totally discards the idea of Caitanya's 'paramourhood'.[4]

Sushilkumār De puts some stress on the outstanding religious personality of Caitanya.[5] But the songs of the *Gaurapadataranginī* harp on the idea that the common people, sternly controlled by the orthodox Brāhmaṇas, were greatly attracted by the maddening songs, dances, processions and ceremonies organised by Caitanya and his followers. According to one song many people became as pure as pearls simply by dancing and singing.[6] The quintessence of bliss divine was manifest in his beautiful body, in his passionate

1. S.K.De, op. cit. p. 75.
2. CBH: Lakṣmī Devī's father, Vallabha, said: *Save Eka Vacana Valite Lajjā Pāi| Āmi Se Nirdhana Kichu Dite Śakti Nāi||* p. 60.
3. CBH: p.96: *Tave Divya Dhenu Bhūmi Śayyā Dāsī Dāsa| Aneka Yautuka Diyā Karila Ullāsa||* The cost of Caitanya's second marriage was voluntarily borne by a rich admirer of Caitanya named Buddhimanta Khān. CBH. p. 92: *Buddhimanta Khān Bale Śuna Sarva Bhāi| Bāmaṇiā Sajjā E Vivāhe Kichu Nāi||*
4. CBH: p. 90: "*...Save Strī Mātra Nā Dekhena Dṛṣtikoṇe.... Ataeva yata Mahāmahima Sakale| Gaurāngaṇāgarahena Stava Nāhi Bale||*
5. *Vaiṣṇave Faith and Movement*, p. 103.
6. *Gaurapadataranginī*, p. 94, song 78.

nāmakīrtana, and in his ecstatic dances.[1] Even the women, taking their bath in the Ganges, were affected by the emotional appeal of his presence and ecstatic *bhakti*.[2]

But the point is that even when Caitanya was a recognised religious leader he could not give up the rituals. He was ceremonially consecrated both as an *avatāra* and as the supreme *Guru* of the Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa and Śāntipura. The initiation ceremony was organised by Advaita, Nityānanda and Śrīvāsa. It ended in a grand feast.[3] The Caitanya movement was not basically a leftist movement against the current value-schedule. It was perfectly legal and in conformity to the prevailing social conventions.

Ninety songs describe the *Kīrtanas*. One of these alludes to the formation of seven *Kīrtana* groups led by Nityānanda, Mukunda, Advaita, Gadādhara, Vāsu Ghoṣa, Murāri Gupta and Narahari Sarkār.[4] Each party was equipped with drums and cymbals. Devotional ecstasy was unknown to the people of Navadvīpa. The *Kīrtanas*, characterised by the fervour of devotion, were unique. The songs of the *Gaurapadataranginī* constantly harp on the effects of the *Kīrtanas* and gala Vaiṣṇava processions. The emotional tension was so great that people forgot caste distinctions when they participated in them. This particular feature of the *Kīrtanas* is stressed upon in almost every song on them. According to Locana Dāsa the *Kīrtanas* signified the advent of the age of love in Navadvīpa.[5] The opponents of Vaiṣṇavism were really taken aback by the wonderful effusion of sentimental *bhakti*. Many of them were easily converted.[6] The *Kīrtana*-singers violated untouchability with impunity. One song describes Caitanya as the God of the poor and the down-trodden. But the movement was not directed against

1. Ibid., p. 99, song 99.
2. Ibid., pp. 105-106, explanatory note.
3. Ibid., pp. 149-157: songs 1-32.
4. *Gaurapadataranginī*, p. 155, song no. 27.
5. Ibid., p. 161, song 19: *Saptadvīpa Mahimājhe| Tāhe Navadvīpa Sāje| Tāhe Nava Premāra Prakāśa||*
6. Ibid., P. 169 : song 53 : *Atula Pratāpe Kāmpi Duraj̃nagaṇa| Leyai Saraṇa Caraṇatale Paḍayi.*

the aristocracy. Rich men and Brāhmaṇas were called upon to join it.

The deep ecstasy of Caitanya himself is the subject-matter of fifty-two songs. Surendranāth Dāsgupta lent respectability to the idea that Caitanya's ecstasy was something 'pathological'. He wrote : "The religious life of Caitanya unfolds unique pathological symptoms of devotion which are perhaps unparalleled in the history of any other saints that we know of. The nearest approach will probably be in the life of St. Francis of Assisi ; but the emotional flow in Caitanya seems to be more self-centred and deeper . . . Without the life of Caitanya our storehouse of pathological religious experience would have been wanting in one of the most fruitful harvests of pure emotionalism in religion."[1] The evaluation sounds questionable since Dāsgupta commits more than one serious error while giving an accout of the basic works of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.[2] A mystic experience, such as that of Caitanya, cannot always be scientifically explained. Whether Caitanya's religion was 'pure emotionalism' or not may be known only from a dispassionate analysis of the ideas inherent in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, and the impact of these ideas on contemporary society in Bengal.

In the ecstatic state Caitanya endlessly harped on the Vṛndāvana legend of Kṛṣṇa. He was honoured by his followers as Kṛṣṇa reborn in human form for the redemption of the world. The movement was anti-intellectual. Scholarship had no place in the *Kīrtanas*.[3] No sermons were delivered from a pulpit. Doctrines and tenets were not discussed. The movement was conceived in songs, dances and devotion for Kṛṣṇa. The greatest emphasis was laid on *Rasa*

1. Surendranāth Dāsgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (1961), IV, p. 389.
2. Ibid., p. 394 : *Prītisaṃdarbha* and *Paramātmasaṃdarbha* (spelt *Paramārthasaṃdarbha*) of Jīva Gosvāmin have been attributed to the authorship of Rūpa Gosvāmin. *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* of Rūpa Gosvāmin has been ascribed to the authorship of Sanātana. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha* of Jīva Gosvāmin, too, has been attributed to Sanātana, who is described as the author of a commentary on Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*.
3. CBH : p. 197 : *Dāne Kule Pāṇḍitye Caitanya Nāhi Pāi| Kevala Bhaktira Vaśa Caitanya Gosāi|| Sei Navadvīpe Henā Prakāśa Haila| Yata Bhattācārya Ekojana Nā Dekhila||*

or aesthetic intuition. Dry theories were discarded. Perhaps this conscious repudiation of knowledge, which had created a gulf between the literate elite and the Vaiṣṇavas, made the movement highly significant and attractive to the common people.

In an interesting song Narahari describes Caitanya's encounter with the low-caste merchants and traders of the town.[1] They gave him rich presents because they felt that his advent had made them prosperous. Caitanya very probably violated caste rules when he accepted gifts from them. But he was never criticized for this erratic behaviour. According to Vṛndāvana Dāsa all sorts of people sent him gifts on ceremonial occasions.[2] This statement possibly implies that Caitanya's importance as a religious leader was recognised by the common people of the town.

Caitanya's decision to renounce the world is explained in two songs of Vṛndāvana Dāsa and one song of Vāsu Ghoṣa.[3] Caitanya's emotional approach was opposed by the Navadvīpa professors and their students. Some students even planned a situation in which Caitanya might be the victim of a dastardly assault.[4] It is said that Caitanya's renunciation of the world made some of them highly repentant.[5] The great agony of his old mother and young wife, consequent upon his sudden departure from Navadvīpa, is the theme of a great number of songs on *Caitanyasannyāsa*.[6] The emotional appeal of these songs must have been very powerful at the time of the occurrence of the tragic event. Undoubtedly these songs became an effective medium for the spread of the Caitanya legend.

1. *Gaurapadatarangiṇī*, V, ii, song 40.
2. CBH : p. 229 : Advaita is reported to have said that Caitanya had become a friend of the low-caste oilmen and flower-vendors : *Tili Mālī Sane Kara Premera Vilāsa*. The sending of gifts to Caitanya on ceremonial occasions is referred to in CBH, p. 83 : *Navadvīpe Yārā Yata Dharmakarma Kare*/ *Bhojyavastu Vastra Avaśya Pāṭhāyā Prabhughare*//
3. *Gaurapadatarangiṇī*, V, iii, song 2 ; V, iii, songs 28-29.
4. CBH : pp. 291-292. The students wanted to form a *Samavāya* or Union against Caitanya.
5. *Gaurapadatarangiṇī*, V, iii, Songs 20-31.
6. Ibid., pp. 249-262, 34 songs.

III

What were the basic ideas of Caitanya and his circle in Navadvīpa? The answer to this question will depend on the sources from which one may wish to derive it.

In *Caitanyacandrodayaṃ* Kavi Karṇapūra very clearly states that Caitanya had two aims, neither of which had probably anything to do with the concept of *madhurarati*. The first aim was to contradict "absolute non-dualism". The second aim was to prove that Kṛṣṇa was Brahman.[1] His general purpose was to bring redemption to people "suffering from three types of afflictions."[2] Those who believed that Kṛṣṇa was Brahman, sang of his Name, and practised *bhakti* as a form of *yoga*,[3] were his followers.

The important point is that Caitanya's aim was not the dissemination of "erotic" *bhakti*. In the biographies of Caitanya, written by Murāri Gupta and Vṛndāvana Dāsa, the legend of Rādhā, the other milkmaids and the Vṛndāvana sports of Kṛṣṇa, which later formed the bedrock of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, are not emphasized. Vṛndavana Dāsa says that Caitanya was a great teacher of *Dāsyabhāva* or the "mood of a servant of the Lord".[4] One may say that in his trances and tantrums, which are so vividly described by Vṛndāvana Dāsa, Caitanya's *Rādhābhāva* or the mood of love-lorn Rādhā is implied. But that is a debatable point, because

1. *Caitanyacandrodayaṃ* ed. Manīndranāth Guha, p. 8, Canto I, Speech of the Sūtradhāra : "*Mārisa*! *Avadhehi Vadhe Hi Mānaso Nirviśeṣe' śeṣe Pare Brāhmaṇi Laya...*" etc.
2. Ibid., p. 8, Canto I, verse 7 : "*Yasya Chhāyā Bhavādhvaśramaśamanakarī Bhaktasaṃkalpasiddher, Hetuścaitanyakalpadruma Iha Bhuvane Kaścana Prādurāsīt||*
3. Ibid., see Note I : "*Puruṣārthastasya Sādhanaṃ Dhanaṃ Nāma Nāma-Saṃkīrtanapradhānaṃ vividhabhakti bhaktiyogamāvirbhāvayituṃ Bhagavān Śrīcaitanyarūpī Bhavannāvirāsīt.*
4. CBH : p. 141 : *Dāsyabhāve Prabhu Yave Karena Rodana| Haila Prahara Dui Gangā Āgamana||* p. 154 : *Nityānandasvarūpera Svabhāva Sarvathā| Tilārdheka Dāsyabhāva Nāhika Anyathā||* p. 175 : *Vede Bhāgavate Kahe Dāsya Vaḍa Dhana| Dāsya Lāgi Rāma Aja Bhavera Yatana||...Dāsyabhāve Nāce Prabhu Śrigaurāngasundara.* p.223. *Nimāyin Paṇiḍta Satya Śrīkṛṣṇera Dāsa.* p. 231 : Advaita saya: *Sabhākāre Diyācha Uttama Dāsyabhāva| Āmāre Diyācha Prabhu Yata Kichu Rāga.||*

Vṛndāvana Dāsa does not compare Caitanya'a great pining for Kṛṣṇa with that of Rādhā. Secondly, Rādhā is scarcely mentioned in *Caitanyabhāgavata.* Very possibly Caitanya was at first regarded as a "four-handed" *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. Murāri Gupta describes him as "four-handed" Hari.[1] This was also initially the view of many of his devotees. Vṛndāvana Dāsa describes how a Vaiṣṇava Brāhmaṇa saw in the child Caitanya the manifestation of four-handed Viṣṇu.[2] Both Vṛndāvana Dāsa and Kavi Karṇapūra very clearly state that the fundamental purpose of the Caitanya *avatāra* was to spread *bhakti* in a society dominated by materialism, ritualism and cultivation of un-devotional philosophies and doctrines.[3]

The total psychic absorption in *Bhakti* made Caitanya a preacher of social radicalism. He said that even an untouchable Caṇḍāla was not a Caṇḍāla if he uttered the name of Kṛṣṇa. But a Brāhmaṇa was not a Brāhmaṇa if he went astray.[4] He himself abruptly terminated his teaching career when he saw that his interpretations in terms of *bhakti* rather puzzled his pupils.[5]

Caitanya's attitude was eclectic. He never preached sectarianism. The eclectic tendency grew strong when Nityānanda arrived at Navadvīpa. According to Vṛndāvana Dāsa *bhaktiyoga*, as taught by Caitanya, was incompatible with tyrannical oppression of the people, violence and sectarianism.[6] Both Caitanya and Advaita desired that the *bhakti*-movement should encompass the women, the Śudras, and the untouchables. The programme of disseminating *bhakti* on the widest possible basis was adopted during Caitanya's

1. *Śrīkṛṣṇacaitanyacaritāmṛtaṃ*, verse 14
2. CBH. p. 29.
3. CBH. p. 49 *Haribhaktiśūnya Haila Sakala Saṃsāra* etc. *Śrīcaitanyacandrodayaṃ*, Canto II, pp. 56-62.
4. CBH: p. 120 : *Caṇḍāla Caṇḍāla Nahe Yadi Kṛṣṇa Vale| Vipra Nahe Vipra Yadi Asatpathe Cale||*
5. CBH: pp. 126-127.
6. CBH: p. 155 : *Bhaktiyoga Bine Ihā Bujhāna Nā Yāya| Jāne Jana Kata Gauracandrera Kṛpāya|| Viṣṇu Pūjiyāo Ye Prajāra Pīḍā Kare| Pūjāo Niṣphale Yāya Āro Duhkhe Mare|...Eka Avatāre Bhaje Nā Bhajaye Āra| Kṛṣṇa Raghunāthe Kare Bheda Vyāvahāra|| Balarāma Śiva Prati Prīta Nāhi Kare| Bhaktādhama Śāstre Kahe Esava Janāre||*

consecration.[1] Caitanya's attempt to maintain cordial relations with the low-caste traders and merchants may be explained as an attempt on his part to woo them away from the company of the Buddhists. Karṇapura says that the Vaiśyas were Buddhists. He also says that the Śudras were preaching the lessons of the *Dharmaśāstra*.[2] He describes the *Naiyāyikas* as people given to fancy and fantasy.[3] Apparently Caitanya and his followers wanted to use the opportunity of establishing a link with the 'misdirected' populace. This opportunity for them was the fruit of the social exclusiveness which the Brāhmaṇas had been preaching since the time of Vallāla Sena.

IV

According to Kavi Karṇapura, Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal, with its emphasis on *Prīta*, *Preyas*, *Vatsala* and *Ujjvala rasas*, owed its inception to Mādhavendra Purī.[4] Later on five men played a vital role in the development of the Caitanya movement. The foremost of them was Advaita Ācārya. He was the first important man to attribute divinity to Caitanya[5] The other four men were Nityānanda, Rāmānanda Rāya, Sanātana Gosvāmin and his brother Rūpa Gosvāmin. Caitanya himself is said to have acknowledged his indebtedness to Advaita, Nityānanda, Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, Rāmānanda Rāya and Svarūpa Dāmodara.[6] Nityānanda, an itinerant ascetic of the *Avadhūta* order, and probaly a Tāntrika, was older than Caitanya.[7] He was in all probability converted into Vaiṣṇavism

1. CBH; p. 162: *Advaita Balaye Yadi Bhakti Vilāyivā| Śrī Ādi Yata Mūrkhere Se Divā|* etc.
2. *Caitanyacandrodayaṃ*, p. 56, verse 2
3. Ibid., 57, verse 4
4. *Gauragaṇoddeśadīpikā* p. 15
5. CBH. Part II, ch. 2, p. 133.
6. CCM, pp. 505-506.
7. There is some confusion about Nityānanda's *avadhūta* status. The *Nirvāṇa Tantra* (ed. Rasikmohan Chattopādhyāya in *Tantrasaṃgroha*, pp. 10-11) gives a detailed description of the *Avadhūta*-status in Ch. XIII. According to *Prāṇatoṣaṇī Tantra*, pp. 535 f, an *avadhūta* might very well be a householder: *Avadhūtaśca Dvividho Gṛhasthaśca Digamvara, Sacelaśca Sadāraśca Bhāvakah Sādhakah Sūcih.* This point is not mentioned by Radhāgovinda Nāth in his commentary on CCM, II, 12: pp. 185-186.

by Mādhavendra Purī. Very suddenly he arrived at Navadvīpa and established contact with the local Vaiṣṇavas. He infused into the movement a great passion. It was Nityānanda, and not Advaita or Caitanya, who was regarded as the greatest enemy of the Brāhmaṇical order. A contemporary Brāhmaṇa *smārta* attributes in a Sanskrit verse the downfall of the Brāhmaṇas to the extreme indifference of the 'neo-logicians' to the necessity of maintaining the Brāhmaṇical social order, and to the dances of Nityānanda Avadhūta.[1] With the help of *Yavana* Haridāsa Nityānanda converted, at great personal risk, two notorious hooligans of Navadvīpa named Jagāi and Mādhāi. Their conversion made him famous overnight.[2]

Rāmānanda Rāya was the governor of Vidyānagara (Rājmahendry) on the Godāvarī under Pratāparudra, king of Purī (1497-1540). Caitanya met him in Vidyānagara on his way to the Deccan. According to Rādhāgovinda Nāth, Caitanya learnt the main theological concepts from him and transmitted them to Rūpa and Sanātana. But it is doubtful whether the fundamental tenets were formulated by Rāmānanda Rāya who has been described by Kavi Karṇapūra as a *Sahajavaiṣṇava*.[3] It seems that Rāmānanda Rāya, a provincial governor, was fully convinced of the genuineness of Caitanaya's viewpoints and asceticism, and helped him stay in Purī for many years without let or hindrance. Rāmānanda Rāya might also have induced Pratāparudradeva to accept the young saint as a great spiritual leader. It seems that Caitanya was an expert in 'Vaiṣṇa-

1. Verse quoted by Dīnesh Chandra Bhattcārya in *Bāngālīr Sārasvat Avadān*, p. 103.
2. CBH : pp. 204-211. Nityānanda and *Yavana* Haridāsa were chased by Jagāi and Mādhāi through the narrow streets of Nadvīpa when Nityānanda proposed their conversion.
3. *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 153 ; *Caitanyacandrodayaṃ*, Act VII, p. 262 : *"Mahārāja, Sa Khalu Sahajavaiṣṇavo bhavati, Pūrvamayamāsmākaṃupahāsapātramāsīt.*

vising' bureaucrats.[1] He succeeded in getting the full support of the brothers Sanātana and Rūpa, who were influential ministers of the Sultan of Bengal. They lived like Muhammadan grandees. They were also regarded as persons who were untouchable.[2]

Sanātana and Rupa had Vaiṣṇava sympathies even before their meeting with Caitanya. They were Cānārese Brāhmaṇas whose ancestors had settled in Bengal at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries.[3] Rāmānanda Rāya is not known to have renounced the world, but Sanātana and Rūpa became ascetics. Svarūpa Dāmodara, whose early life is shrouded in mystery, became an important leader and theoretician of the Caitanya movement only after he became a sort of secretary to Caitanya.[4] It seems that Rāmānanda, Svarūpa Dāmodara, Sanātana and Rūpa had formed a powerful group which ultimately gained supremacy in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava movement. Advaita and Nityānanda did not publicly challenge their ascendancy. But they were not influenced by their views, nor debarred from building up their own circles.

V

The theological concepts of the Caitanya movement were first formulated by Svarūpa Dāmodara in a *Kaḍcā* or collection of notes which is yet to be discovered. Later the concepts were elaborated by Sanātana and Rūpa in their numerous works. But as long as Caitanya lived he was the main driving force behind the powerful movement. Towards the end of his life Caitanya grew weak and

1, Some of the bureaucrats and landlords converted by Caitanya were Sanātana and Rūpa, both ministers of Husain Shah, Keśava Chhetri, Army Commander of Husain Shah, Subuddhi Rāya, Buddhimanta Khān, Zamindārs of Navadvīpa, Bijalī Khān, a Pāthān Army Commander, Rāmacandra Khān, "Adhikarī" of Chatrabhoga, Śivānanda Sen, Zamindar of Kumārahatta, Mukunda Sarkār, Physician by appointment to the Sultan, Rāmānanda Rāyā, Governor of Vidyānagar.

2. Bimānbihārī Majumdār, *Śrī Caitanyacariter Upādān*, p, 123 ; CCM, II, 19 : verses 56-65.

3. Sushilkumar De, op.cit., pp. 146-165-

4. Ibid., pp. 39-41 : Svarūpa is said to have influenced Caitanya.

emaciated mainly because of his emotional tantrums. But he never relaxed his control of the movement. Sushilkumar De and J. N. Farquhar have ascribed the great success of his movement to his 'unique' religious personality.[1] But they have not given Caitanya any credit for organising the movement. Sushilkumar De, however, opines that "on the main lines of its growth and expansion the movement was directly inspired by the example of his life and experience, even if he did not actually persevere at the task."[2] The view of De and Farquhar have been challenged by Girijāśanakar Raychaudhuri.[3]

Several facts may be stated to show that Caitanya himself directed and organised the Vaiṣṇava movement at least in the initial stage. Caitanya transformed *Saṃkīrtana*, initially sung behind closed doors,[4] into a powerful mass-medium. He adopted certain measures to neutralise the Muhammadan Qāzi of Navadvīpa and break the unholy alliance between him and the conservative Hindus. It was Caitanya who set the noble example of freely mixing and fraternising with people of different castes and conditions. Then again, it was he who, according to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, directed Sanātana and Rūpa to build up the theology on lines specified by him, and to spread the movement in Mathurā and Vṛndāvana. Caitanya's pilgrimage and travels might be interpreted as conscious effort on his part to gather valuable experience, and to spread *bhakti* far and wide. Just after meeting Rāmānanda Rāya in Vidyānagara Caitanya held long talks with him on theological points.

Unlike the other mystic *Sādhus* Caitanya did not live in a hide-out in the Himalayas or in a jungle. He was an extremely social saint with innumerable social connections. His long sojourn in a great pilgrim centre like Purī, where pilgrims came from all parts

1. Ibid., pp. 103 f.: Farquhar, *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India* pp. 229-30.
2. De, op. cit., p. 104
3. Girijāśankar Rāychaudhurī, *Bānglā Caritagranthe Srīcaitanya*, pp. 302-303. According to CCM p. 35, Caitanya himself directed Rūpa and Sanātana to spread the cult in Mathurā and Vṛndāvana.
4. *Kīrtana* behind closed doors is described in CBH : pp. 151, 172, 229.

of India had, no doubt, a very significant bearing on the propagation of his faith. His followers also understood the significance of his stay in Purī. Sixty-six Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal and Orissa assembled in Purī during a *Rathayātrā* festival, and formally deified Caitanya.[1] The news of his deification, which spread far and wide, must have strengthened the position of his followers outside Bengal. The Vaiṣṇava devotees of Bengal annually visited Gambhīrā in Purī where Caitanya lived, and thus maintained their link with him.

Caitanya's whole life was a tremendous experiment with the theory and practice of devotion. He pursued *bhakti* with a remarkable fixity of purpose which enabled him to face many obstacles bravely and reṣolutely. He himself was an unfailing source of inspiration to his followers. The songs of the *Gaurapadatarangiṇī* depict him as the great central figure of the Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal.

In one respect, however, Caitanya failed to satisfy the future historians of the movement. Although the early biographers refer to and describe his great scholarship, he did not write any theological or philosophical treatise. It is said that his fundamental ideas were noted down and edited by Svarūpa Dāmodara. But his notes or *Kaḍacā* disappeared. It was used by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. It was presumably read by Karṇapūra. But since it is lost, one cannot say to what extent was it really authoritative.

The 'six gosvamins' of Vṛndāvana were the real authors of the theology and philosophy of the Caitanya order, known as the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order. These gosvāmins were Sanātana, Rūpa, their nephew Jīva, Raghunātha Dāsa, Raghunātha Bhatta, and Gopāla Bhatta. At least five of them were great scholars. The scholarship of Raghunātha Bhatta cannot be evaluated because he wrote no dissertation, treatise or *Kāvya:* Gopāla Bhatta was a South Indian. These Gosvāmins or Cardinals emulated the example of the Deccanese Vaiṣṇava *Ācāryas* by fastening on the essentially simple faith of Caitanya a philosophical system, a theological system,

1, Murarī Gupta, *Śrīkṛṣṇacaitanyacaritāmṛtaṃ*, part IV, Canto. 17, and 18, pp. 160-164.

a hagiology, a peculiarly Vaiṣṇava version of aesthetics and grammar,[1] an elaborate ritual, and lots of ornate Sanskrit poetry. They 'Sanskritised' *bhakti* to such an extent that it lost its original emotional content and almost became a scholastic system like *Navyanyāya.*

The form and content of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism evolved in urban-intellectual centres like Navadvīpa, Purī, Vārānasī, Prayāga and Vṛndāvana-Mathurā. The form was fashioned out of ancient Vaiṣṇava myths and rituals. The works of the leading Gosvāmins are fantastic exhibitions of their borrowings from ancient myths and *Tantras* and ritualistic works. It is rather doubtful if Caitanya ever did ask them to clutter their texts with so many quotations, and to create a theology which could be disseminated only by exceptionally learned professors.

The formulation of so many systems, however, established a link between Caitanya's simple *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa and the great tradition of Hinduism. The urge for 'Sanskritizing' *bhakti*, which was not felt by the popular saints like Rāmānanda and Kabir, might have stemmed from the ineradicable aristocracy and scholarship of the gosvāmins. It might also have sprung from the non-Bengali atmosphere and environment of Vṛndāvana where the Vallabhācārī order had considerable strength.[2]

In fact the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order is said to be affiliated to the order founded by the great Vaiṣṇava saint Madhvācārya. The Mādhva affiliation of the Caitanya order, first propounded by Valadeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa in the eighteenth century is, however, a debatable point.[3] Valadeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa mentions Caitanya as the last of the Mādhva *gurus*. But there is no mention of Caitanya

1. The Vaiṣṇava version of the grammar is given by Rūpa Gosvāmin in *Prayuktākhyātacandrikā* and in Jīva Gosvamin's *Harināmāmṛtavyākaraṇam*. All illustrations in the second work mention Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā and their associates.
2. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, I, I, p. 324 ; Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Bengal Under Akbar and Jahangir*, pp. 125-128.
3. Introductory verses of *Govindabhāṣya*, and *Prameyaratnāvalī* ed. Śyāmlāl Gosvāmī, and Atulkṛṣṇa Gosvāmi, respectively. Vide, p. 4 of the second work.

in the list of the *gurus* of the Mādhva sect discovered by Bhāṇḍarkar in the Mādhva *maths* in Belgaum and Pune.[1] Sushilkumar De argues that Śrīdhara Svāmin, Mādhavendra Purī and Īśvara Purī apparently belonged to Śankara's 'Bhāratī order.'[2] Keśava Bhāratī, who 'initiated' Caitanya, also belonged to the 'Bhāratī' order. According to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava historians, however, the link with the Mādhva order is shown only to respect a tradition. Jīva Gosvāmin refers to Madhvācārya in his *Tattvasaṃdarbha*.[3] Commenting on this portion of the statement, Rādhāmohana Gosvāmin wrote :

> "Even though Madhvācārya believed in dualism, all of his opinions have not been accepted...He does not accept the primacy of the sports of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana and he does not recognize the importance of the friends and servants of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Madhvācārya regards Lakṣmī as the principal *Śakti* of Viṣṇu. Madhvācarya belonged to the order of Śankarācārya. But he yet took refuge in the Brahma Sect. He quite independently set up his own order. Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya was an *avatāra* of God. He yet felt it necessary to seek affiliation with the Mādhva order. But he quite independently postulated his own views." (Translated).[4]

It is, therefore, reasonable to think that while the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas themselves do not object to the tradition of a link between their order and that of Madhvācārya, it would be rather pointless to investigate into their *supposed* link with the *Śankara* order. But the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava affiliation with the *Mādhvasampradāya* (which possibly made Max Weber describe Caitanyā as 'student Caitanya')[5] was merely a matter of form. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order was for all practical purposes a new Vaiṣṇava order.[6]

1. Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, IV, p. 56,
2. Sushilkumar De, *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, p. 20.
3. *Tattvasaṃdarbha*, p. 113, Statement 28.
4. Ibid., p. 114 : *Śrīmadhvācāryasya Dvaitavādino 'pi Na Sarvaṃ Mataṃ Gṛhītaṃ*, etc.
5. Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, p. 314.
6. This is the authoritative opinion of Gauragovindānanda Bhāgavatasvāmin, quoted by Haridāsa Dāsa in *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, Part I, p. 113 : *Sāmpradāyaikadikṣānāṃ Mithah Kincinmatāntarāt/ Śākhābhedo Bhavenmātraṃ Saṃpradāyo Na Bhidyate//* etc.

VI

'Sanskritization' of *bhakti* was, however, tantamount to a misinterpretation of the basic idea of Caitanya. According to him the genuine devotee of Kṛṣṇa realizes him not by learning and logic but by simple faith. It was devotion, recollected in emotion, that brought Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, the great scholar, to Caitanya's feet.[1] It is also quite interesting to note that a good number of the Bengali professors of *Navyanyāya* later composed ornate invocatory verses on Kṛṣṇa in the beginning of their manuscripts.[2] But yet the great labours of the Gosvāmins gave the Caitanya movement a sense of direction and made it acceptable to the conservative elements. The Gosvāminsṣaved Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism from the unenviable prospect of becoming a "deviant" order like the *sahajiyā* sect, which was rejected by the elite groups, and which gradually become insignificant.

To the *Smārta paṇḍitas* the Caitanya movement appeared as an iconoclastic movement against the Brāhmanical rituals. They or their representatives complained to the Muhammadan Qāzi that Caitanya was deliberately undermining the basis of the Hindu society.[3] Caitanya neutralized the Qāzi by a massive religious demonstration.[4] Later the *Smārtas* instigated their students

1. Dineshchandra Bhattācharya quotes the opening verse of the Sārvabhauma's *Hetvābhāsaprakaraṇa* to prove that he was a devout Vaiṣṇava even before his meeting with Caitanya. The verse is as follows :
   Hṛdvyomakamalāsīnaṃ Tattvasādhakamadbhūtaṃ |
   Anābhāsaṃ Paraṃ Dhāma Ghanaśyāmaṃ Ahaṃ Bhaje ||
   Bāngālīr Sārasvat Avadān, I, p, 38.
2. Ibid., pp. 40, 50, 126, 130, 137, 145, 147, 155, 175, 176, 177, 181 : verses composed by Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, Vāhīnīpati, Viśvanātha Pancānana, Śrīrāma Tarkālaṃkāra, Bhavānanda Siddhāntavāgīśa, Rudra Bhattācārya, Bhavānanda Tarkāvāgīśa, Mathurānātha Tarkāvāgīśa, Rāmcandra Nyāyavāgīśa, Ramagopāla Siddhāntapancānana, Gadādhara Bhattācārya.
3. CCM, pp. 93-94. In CBH, p. 263f, however, the Qāzi is reported to have expressed his displasure at the spread of Hindu manners (*Hinduyāni*) after the popularisation of the *Kīrtana*.
4. The demonstration is described in CBH, pp. 263-281.

to form a sort of *Samavāya* or Union against Caitanya.[1] Caitanya became a mendicant and set up an example of moral courage; he thus saved his poor old mother and innocent young wife from the misery of social ostracism. Very probably the numerous folk-cults at first welcomed the Caitanya movement as another manifestation of anti-Brāhmaṇical culture.[2] *Bhakti* as an abstract principle made no distinction between the gods. Excepting the *Śākta* Tantrikas almost all other sects felt highly elated at Caitanya's advent. How many people were initially converted into the new faith? There is no definite answer to this question. Jagāi and Mādhāi prominently figure among the converts. Vṛndāvana Dāsa says that a programme of door-to-door preaching of *Harināma* was adopted by Caitanya and his followers.[3] In all probability this programme was pursued particularly in those areas of Navadvīpa which were inhabited by low-caste people. The Brāhmaṇas and the other high castes possibly did not allow the followers of Vaiṣṇavism to chant their hymns at their door-steps. The utter failure of Caitanya to gain the support of the professors and their students reflected his insignificance as a teacher and a scholar. But his decision to renounce the world made it clear that he had both sincerity of purpose and great moral courage. Very soon the legend of his renunciation spread far and wide. It was said that the handsome, blithe, carefree youth embraced a life of incalculable hardship so that the people might be saved from sin and false religion. But the orthodox elements were not affected by the legend.

1. CBH, p. 275.
2. CBH : pp. 210-220 : Gods Dharmarāja, Yama, Śankara, Gaṇeśa, Kārttika, Brahma, Indra, and many other gods felt elated at Caitanya's advent. The *Śāktas* are not included in the list.
3. CBH : p. 142 : Caitanya said : "*Ghare Ghare Karimu Kīrtana Paracāra | Mora Yaśe Nāce Yena Sakala Saṃsāra*"||

CHAPTER IV

BHAKTI AND ITS SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

I

Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* was explained in the aphorisms of Nārada and Śāṇḍilya, the *Bhaktiratnāvalī* anthology of Viṣṇu Purī, Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*, and Jīva Gosvāmin's *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*. The Vallabhācārī ideology of *Bhakti* was stated in *Bhaktimārtanda*, which follows the interpretation of *bhakti* in the aphorisms of Śāṇḍilya, All Vaiṣṇava sects honour Nārada as a great Vaiṣṇava saint. According to the *Padmapurāṇa* Nārada once assumed the shape of a woman with whom Kṛṣṇa enjoyed love for one year.[1] The Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins have quoted in their works statements and verses from *Nāradakalpa*, *Nāradatantra*, *Nāradapancarātra*, *Nāradapurāṇa* and *Nāradasmṛti*. The *Nāradabhaktisūtra* has eighty-four aphorisms, which are said to have been prepared by Vyāsadeva for Nārada.[2] But *Nāradabhaktisūtra* itself is not mentioned in the works of the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins.[3] The aphorisms of Śāṇḍilya, given in *Śāṇḍilyaśūtra*, form a century of terse, but easily understandable statements. Svapneśvara, a grandson of Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, wrote an excellent commentary on it. *Śāṇḍilyasūtra* has been described as a *Mimāṃsā* of *bhakti*, or an authoritative interpretation of *Śruti* from the standpoint of *bhakti*.[4] This work, too, is not mentioned in the works of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins. Nārada and Śāṇḍilya preach the worship of Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa and *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa. But their aphorisms might imply *bhakti* for any other god or goddess. Moreover, the *bhedābheda* concept

1. *Padmapurāṇa*, Ch. 43. 189.
2. BSNS, I, Intro. p. I.
3. The reference in the works of the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins have been listed by S. K. De in *Vaiṣṇava Faith And Movement* and Naresh Chandra Jānā *Vṛndāvaner Chaya Gosvāmī*. "Pariśiṣta Kha". (Appendix-B), pp, 273-294.
4. BSNS II, preface, p. v.

is the basis of *Śāṇḍilyasūtra*.[1] Rūpa Gosvāmin and his nephew Jiva Gosvāmin felt the necessity of interpreting *bhakti* according to the sectarian dogma. Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Bhatirasāmṛtasindhu*, a big work with 2141 verses, on which Jīva Gosvāmin composed a commentary called *Durgamasaṃgamanī*, was designed as a work on the aesthetics of *Bhaktirasa*. It is divided into 'East', 'South', 'West', and 'North' divisions. The vast work was composed in 1541. *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*, like any other work on aesthetics, is remarkable for its classifications and categorisations, each of which has at least one illustrative verse. The general principles of *bhakti*, considered strictly from the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava point of view, are stated in the four 'waves' of the 'East' division. But the whole discussion is cluttered with hair-splitting classification and the arrangement of categories. The simplicity of the concept of *bhakti* is totally lost in this useless parade of itemised concepts. The aforesaid four 'waves' of the 'East' division creates the impression that Rūpa Gosvāmin is trying to lend an ascetic, otherworldly colour to *bhakti*. Some social implications of *bhakti* have been itemised in the explanation of *Sādhanabhakti* in the second wave of the 'East' division. But therein only the essential points are stated. Sixty-four points of *Sādhanabhakti* have been mentioned. The *Guru's* supremacy has been recognised. The Vaiṣṇavas have been asked to forsake wordly pleasures, and to respect the cows and the Brāhmaṇas. They have been directed to give up the cultivation or the advancement of learning, and show respect for the other gods. They are forbidden to cause worry to others. These points are not elaborated in the text. But the steps towards the consolidation of *bhakti* as a psychic development have been stated in detail. The 'South', 'West' and 'North' divisions of this work contain perhaps the most elaborate exposition of *bhakti* as a theological concept.

Jīva Gosvāmin refers to *Bhaktiratnāvalī* in *Tattvasaṃdarbha*

1. According to Farquhar "the Bhāgavatas of the South use only the Nārada... *the Śāṇḍilyasūtra* may be a Nimvārkite document" *An Outline of Religious Literature of India*, pp. 233-34.

as a *Nivandha* or discourse.[1] *Bhaktiratnāvalī* is really a collection of four hundred and five verses, selected by Viṣṇu Purī of Tirhut, who was an ascetic of the Mādhva order, from approximately eighteen thousand verses of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. Viṣṇu Purī also wrote a commentary on it. According to a legend he was commissioned by Caitnaya himself to prepare the collection.[2]

Rough notes for a *Saṃdarbha* or dissertation on *bhakti* were made by Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin. Later on Jīva Gosvāmin wrote the *Bhaktisaṃdarbha* on the basis of these notes.

Viṣṇu purī collected at least two verses from *Haribhaktisudhodaya*.[3] Vopadeva discussed purely *Viṣṇubhakti* in his *Muktāphala*.[4] *Muktāphala* is referred to by Sanātana Gosvāmin, Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin, and Jīva Gosvāmin.[5]

II

The first thing that strikes the reader of these works is their emphasis on good conduct. Selfishness, the company of bad men, violence, pleasures of the flesh, self-assertion, vanity, the sinful proclivities-all which mean either physical or mental impurity-are to be mercilessly suppressed or discarded.[6] *Bhakti* is high puritanism, a severe criticism of unethical conduct, and individual and social delinquency. *Bhakti* rejects Bohemianism in the name of religion. It is absolutely incompatible with sexual *Yoga*. In fact *bhakti* is considered far superior to *Yoga*. *Yoga* may be necessary for the acquirement of knowledge and practice of devotion. But the state of *Samādhi*, the eighth and the last stage of *Yoga*, in which thought is absorbed in the object of meditation, is considered

1. *Tattvasaṃdarbha*, p. 97. Statement-23.
2. BR, Intro. P. II.
3. BR, p. 76, verse 32; p. 107, verse 45.
4. *Muktāphala*, Chs, 5 and 6.
5. Quoted in *Kramasaṃdarbha* : (Purīdāsa ed.) 1/1/1; *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, 15/151; *Haribhaktivilāsa Tīkā* : 2/11/453; *Vṛhatbhāgavatatīkā*, Saurī Prapannāśrama ed. 1/4/31 ; *Bhāgavatsaṃdarbha* (ed. R. Vidyāratna), p. 369; *Śrīkṛṣṇasaṃdarbha*, (ed. R. Vidyāratna), p. 63.
6. BSNS : I, *Sūtras* 4, 35, 43, 46, 63, 64; BR : 1/10-11, 2/58-60; CCM, p. 499.

inferior to *bhakti*.[1] According to Jīva Gosvāmin, *bhakti* is the best method of *Yoga* in the form of the suppression of the impulses.[2]

The condemnation of evils and the exaltation of the moral virtues are simultaneous. The *bhakti*-verses and aphorisms stress the need of cultivating moral and social virtues like compassion, philanthropy, universal brotherhood regardless of friends and foes, non-violence, truth, and moral discipline.[3] According to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, Caitanya stated the following duties of a *bhakta* or devotee :[4]

1. A *bhakta-vairāgī* should always sing God's Name.
2. He should live by begging.
3. He should never be a glutton.
4. He should be a strict vegetarian.
5. He should never utter or listen to obscenities.
6. He should never eat well and dress well.
7. He should never be conceited.
8. He should be more tolerant than a tree.
9. He should be humbler than the grass.
10. He should pay everybody proper respect.
11. He should make up his mind to worship Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā in Vṛndāvana.

These rules were to be followed by the Vaisnava *Vairāgin*s or ascetics. But save and except begging, the other rules were to be observed by the Vaiṣṇava householders. One may say that the compulsory practice of poverty made it possible for the Vaiṣṇavas to come down to the level of the poor people.

1. BSNS : I, 1/2/11.
2. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha* : p. 70 : *Bhaktaiva Kṛyāmānya Tadāsaktatvena Svata Eva Manonirodho 'pi Syāditi.*
3. BR : 2/29, 2/10-14, 2/58-60;
   BSNS, I, *Sūtras*, 64, 78.
4. CCM, pp. 498-499; *Vairāgi Karive Sadā Nāmasaṃkīrtana/ Māgiyā Khāyiyā Kare Jīvana Rakṣaṇa//...Śākapatraphalamūle Udarabharaṇa...Grāmyakathā Nā Śunive Grāmya Kathā Nā Kahive / Bhāla Na Khāyive Āra Bhāla Nā Parive// Amānī Mānada Sadā Kṛṣṇanāma Lave/ Vraje Rādhākṛṣṇa Sevā Mānasa Karive//* etc.

III

The ideology of *bhakti* was set against that of *Karmakāṇḍa* or rituals. *Bhakti* was considered far superior to rituals, performance of purificatory rites, utterance of mystic syllables and observance of sacraments.[1] The denigration of *Karmakāṇḍa* signified a direct attack on popular superstitions which had led to the multiplication of rituals and enabled the priests to maintain their ecclesiastical and social prominence. But though the importance of rituals is minimised in *bhakti* ideology, they are not totally relegated to the background. According to the *Bhaktiratnāvalī*, the *Kaliyuga* is unfavourable for the observance of rites and ceremonies.[2] But even according to this work "one may easily cross over the troublous sea of life", simply by correctly observing the rituals.[3] But correct observance of rituals was not possible in the *Kali*-age. Nārada, too, does not totally discard social customs and usages.[4] On the question of the expiation of sins, however, there is a difference between *Bhaktiratnāvali* and *Śāṇḍilyasūtra*. According to the former all sorts of sins-wine-bibbing, theft, murder of a woman, killing of kine, regicide and patricide, adultery with the preceptor's wife-are *ipso facto* expiated by the utterance of *Viṣṇunāma or* Viṣṇu's sacred name.[5] The redemption of Ajāmīla, who committed the sin of living with a female slave outside wedlock, is cited as an instance of redemption simply by the utterance of the holy Name.[6] Later the belief that sins are expiated automatically by the utterance of the sacred name of the tutelary deity grew extremely popular. The *Śāktas* used the concept.[7] Śāṇḍilya, however, holds a different

1. BSNS, I, *Sūtras* 25, 49; II, 1/2/13; BR: 1/58. 1/68. 1/77, 2/50-56; 6/7, also, 1/106-107.
2. BR. 1/82-83.
3. BR, 1/106-107.
4. BSNS, I *Sūtras* 13, 49.
5. BR: 5/15-25.
6. BR: 5/25: Ajāmīla was saved simply by uttering the name of Nārāyaṇa, one of his illegitimate children.
7. *Śrī Ramakṛṣṇa* (*Paramahaṃsa*) *Kathāmṛta*, Vol. I, pp. 45-46. This belief compelled many notorious robbers to worship the goddess Kālī.

view. According to him *bhakti* does not lead to the automatic expiation of sins. Expiation of sins, too, does not automatically lead to final redemption. After proper expiation, the former sinner finds redemption only in the practice of *bhakti*. Śāṇḍilya makes it clear that a sinner with the burden of sin has no right to profess or practise *bhakti*.[1]

Nārada was prepared to answer those critics who levelled against the doctrine of *bhakti* the charge of unsocial or anti-social propensity. He says that a *bhakta* is not required to discard social custom and usages.[2] According to him the practice of devotion does not cause social disorganisation because, in the ultimate analysis, devotion means the "consecration" of customary or scriptural ethics to the 'Lord'.[3]

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, however, have an ambivalent attitude towards the question of mixing *bhakti* with ritualistic preformances. According to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, Caitanya himself laid emphasis on some ritualistic points, and requested Sanātana to write a tract on them on the basis of mythological evidence :[4]

It seems that Caitanya advised the *ritualisation* of good conduct. But the question whether he could really effect a compromise between *bhakti*-ecstasy and *bhakti*-rituals will remain unanswered. The implication of the ritualistic items mentioned in CCM[5] is that only a genuine *bhakta* may hope to perform the rituals correctly. But one may also quite reasonably suspect that Kṛṣṇadasa Kavirāja sought justification for such works as *Haribhaktivilāsa* and *Satkṛyāsāradīpikā*, in which the rituals of Gauḍīya Vaiṇṣavism were laid down, by depicting Caitanya as the original formulator of the rituals or ritualistic concepts elaborated in these works. It is very difficult to forget the fact that Caitanya was

1. BSNS, II, 2/2/20, 2/2/27.
2. BSNS, I, *Sūtra* 14.
3. BSNS, I, *Sūtras* 61, 62: *Lokahānau Cintā Na Kāryā Niveditātmalokavedatvāt* (61); *Na Tatsiddhau Lokavyāvahāro Heyah Kintu Phalatyāgastatsādhanaṃca Kāryameva*. (62)
4. CCM, Kālnā ed, pp. 609-633. According to a rough estimate, there are fifty five points.
5. Ibid.

almost compelled to renounce the world by the conservative *Paṇḍitas* and their pupils.[1] Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja does not explain why Caitanya should have considered it important or advisable to prepare a *corpus* of rituals derived from the *Purāṇas*, when he himself had laid the maximum emphasis on unritualistic and non-intellectual *bhakti*.

Jīva Gosvāmin made a great effort to bridge the gulf between *bhakti* and rituals. The fact that he wrote *Bhaktisaṃdarbha* on the basis of notes written by Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin makes both of them, and Sanātana Gosvāmin, who is said to have planned *Haribhaktivilāsa*, mainly responsible for ritualising Caitanya's concept of *bhakti*.

Jīva Gosvāmin seems to have considered *bhakti* as a constructive doctrine. In his *Bhaktisaṃdarbha* there is the traditional denigration of knowledge and *Karmakāṇḍa* which is the common feature of all *bhakti*-schools.[2] But the Gosvāmin also explains the necessity of integrating knowledge and rituals with *bhakti*.[3] He attaches a good deal of importance to what may be literally translated as 'licit' (*Vaidhi*) devotion.[4] According to him *Rāgānugā Bhakti*, or *bhakti* mixed with love, is a psychic development.[5] It is higher than *Vaidhi Bhakti* which necessitates the observance of rituals. But even for *Rāgānugā Bhakti* Jīva Gosvāmin prescribed some ritualistic processes or *Vidhi* so that it might not be misinterpreted as an anti-social idea.[6] Jīva Gosvāmin was deeply influenced by the doctrine of consecration which was also propounded by Nārada.[7] Like Nārada he believed that the Vedas, *Yajnas*, *Yoga*, rituals, wisdom, penance, religion and the concepts of hell and heaven are *Vāsudevapara* or consecrated to Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva.[8] Hence

1. CCM, pp. 93-94.
2. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, pp. 12-16.
3. Ibid., pp. 32-35.
4. Ibid., pp. 369-372.
5. Ibid. pp. 542-544, explanation of the *Rāgānugā* mentality.
6. Ibid., pp. 549-552.
7. See note 3 of page 76.
8. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, pp, 30-31.

there is hardly any reason for looking down on *bhakti* as an anti-social, or iconoclastic idea.

IV

Bhakti is generally anti-caste. Caste differences are said to have been caused by qualitative variations.[1] But it is very liberally conceded that even a *Caṇḍāla* untouchable has the right to be a *bhakta*. It is even asserted that it is not necessary for a *bhakta* even to be a human being. He can very well be an inhuman demon or an animal, a tree, a lesser god.[2] But Madhva thought that *Asuras*, *Rākṣasas*, and *Piśācas* are foredoomed to eternal damnation.[3]

The *Bhaktiratnāvalī* suggests that a *bhakta* may easily give up his caste-rituals.[4] But Jīva Gosvāmin argues that *bhakti* is an essential condition of *Varṇāśrama*.[5] It seems that the author of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* incited the Brāhmaṇas to shed off their caste rituals and embrace *bhakti*. The Tāntrikas might also give up their sinful orgiasticism. *Bhakti* in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* was conceived as a theological platform whereupon the highest and the lowest might stand with equal rights, where pride of birth and wealth had no place, where individual superiority was measurable only by individual devotion.[6] *Bhakti*, however, lost all abstraction when these works made it clear that only the *Avatāras* of Kṛṣṇa must invariably be its objects. Jīva Gosvāmin tries very hard to establish the ascendacy of Kṛṣṇa over other Gods and Goddesses.

1. BSNS, I, *Sūtra* 72; II, 3/1/5; BR. 1/80-81.
2. BSNS, I, *Sūtra* 72; II, 2/2/23-24; *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, pp. 116-118; CCM: p. 466: *Nicajāti Haile Nahe Bhajane Ajogya/ Yei Bhaje Sei Vaḍa Abhakta Hīna Chāra/ Kṛṣṇabhajane Nāhi Jātikulādi Vicāra//* also, BR. 5/41, 1/40.
3. S.N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, IV, p. 58. "The theory of eternal damnation is thus found only in Madhva, and in no other system of Indian philosophy."
4. BR, 7/26.
5. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, p. 164. Explanation of verses from the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*: 11.5.2-3.
6. BR. p. 130.

First he says that Brahman and Śiva should be worshipped as 'Vaiṣṇava' gods.[1] But then he advises the devotees to regard Viṣṇu as a God who is far superior to both of them. Anybody who tries to establish their equality is a veritable *Pāṣandī*.[2] He says that Śiva is worshipped mainly because he is intrinsically 'Vaiṣṇava'.[3] Worship of Śiva is necessary for the expiation of sins after which, during a cycle of a thousand successive births, Vaiṣṇava qualities may slowly develop in the poor sinner. But then Jīva Gosvāmin says that a Vaiṣṇava is far superior to the worshippers of the Sun, Brahman, Śiva and Śakti.[5] Yet he avers that to ignore the other gods and goddesses is an unpardonable offence.[6] To be oblivious of Śiva is a sin because Śiva himself is a great 'Bhāgavata'.[7] *Haribhaktivilāsa* even prescribes the worship of Gaṇeśa as the first step towards the worship of Viṣṇu.[8] The only safe explanation of these glaring contradictions in *Bhaktisaṃdarbha* is that Jīva Gosvāmin tried his best to avoid sectarian quarrels at a time when the Caitanya order was still in its infancy. Lest the opponents of Vaiṣṇavism should say that the Vaiṣṇavas were iconoclastic, Jīva Gosvāmin explained the necessity of idolatry.[9]

Jīva Gosvāmin attaches certain conditions to *Bhakti*-egalitarianism lest the upper castes should consider Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism as a deviant order. At first he supports the view of the *Bhagavatapurāṇa* that a Caṇḍāla-Vaiṣṇava was much better than a non-Vaiṣṇava Brāhmana.[10] He also advises a true Vaiṣṇava never to be indifferent to living beings, never to attach any meaning to the caste of a

1. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, p.127.
2. Ibid., p. 128.
3. Ibid., p. 132.
4. Ibid., pp 132-133.
5. Ibid., p. 136
6. Ibid., pp, 137-139.
7. Ibid., p. 139.
8. *Haribhaktivilāsa* 8/215 : Rādhāgovinda Nāth, *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 418-419.
9. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, pp. 139-143.
10. Ibid. pp. 116-117.

Vaiṣṇava.[1] But then, while interpreting some verses of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, he advises the Vaiṣṇavas to regard only a *bhakta* or Vaiṣṇava-devotee as the best of men, and the highest of all things, living or lifeless.[2] Yet the Vaiṣṇava is also advised to behave in such a manner that others may not feel offended by his actions and attitudes.[3]

V

Bhaktiratnāvalī envisages the emergence of a theocratic order in which science, polity, government, trade and agriculture must be 'consecrated' to Kṛṣṇa.[4] *Bhakti* is suggested as a means of realising national integration. The doctrine of *bhakti* does not belittle the importance of human life. Humanity is regarded as a rare gift, and human life extremely valuable.[5] But king-worship is denounced by Śāṇḍilya, because the only venerable lord is Lord God.[6]

While *Bhaktiratnāvalī* discerns no special value in the performance of meritorious acts like charity,[7] Jīva Gosvāmin enunciates the doctrine of 'disinterested' (*Niṣkāma*') social service as an inalienable part of *bhakti*. According to him worship of God is intimately related to the rendering of service to living beings. If a *Bhakta* intentionally insults a living being he insults God. Man is the living image of God.[8] When others are hungry a real Vaiṣṇava must not think only of satisfying his own hunger. To selfish people God appears as a great fear, as 'death'. Man's supreme duty is to support to the very best of his ability all good

1. Ibid., p. 141; CCM. p. 474: Caitanya is said to have advised his followers to regard the physical body of a Vaiṣṇava as a supranatural body, full of divine bliss: See also, BSNS, I, Sūtra 41.
2. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, pp. 145-146. BR: 4/14, 43: Anybody who is not a *Kṛṣṇa-bhakta* is "a beast, a camel, an ass, a dog, a filthy pig."
3. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, p. 147.
4. BR: 12/2.
5. BR: 1/51, 1/97/2/49.
6. BSNS, II, 2/1/8; 2/1/25
7. BR: 13/6.
8. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, pp. 141-145.

causes.[1] Sushilkumar De does not refer to these high ideals emphasized by Jīva Gosvāmin, when he passes his harsh verdict on the 'ethics' of the Caitanya movement.[2]

The *bhakti*-texts also preach non-violence.[3] Jīva Gosvāmin, however, opines that kindness to living beings, albeit necessary, is not as meritorious as worship of God.[4] If one plucks a flower with the purpose of worshipping God with it, one cannot be said to have committed violence.[5] Unfortunately the same argument may be used to show that the ritual sacrifice of animals is not violence.

VI

The *Guru* is another important subject of the *bhakti*-texts. *Bhaktiratnāvlī* advises the *bhakta* to worship the saints.[6] According to Śāṇḍilya even the *smṛtis* or Hindu 'Institutes' may be consulted for the knowledge of the essential features of *bhakti*.[7] The *Guru* teaches his disciples what they may also learn from *Smṛti*. Śāṇḍilya regards the *Guru* not as a 'demagogue', but primarily as a teacher. But *Bhaktiratnāvalī* and the *Bhaktisaṃdarbha* regard him as someone almost equal to God.[8] The *Gurus* and the saints have a special position in the body Politic visualised in *Bhaktiratnāvalī*. Jiva Gosvāmin, however, refers to two types of saints, namely, the 'wise' saints, and saints who practise devotion. The saintly devotee is better than the 'wise' saint.[9] A *Śravaṇaguru* or a preceptor who either teaches or preaches *bhakti* is also an important person.[10] There is

1. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, p, 145.
2. S. K. De, *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*. pp. p. 548 : "...it fails to furnish the motive for any strenuous social or indlvidual morality."
3. BSNA I, Sutra-78 : II, 2/1/19, BR. 2/10-14.29,58-60.
4. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, pp. 148-149.
5. Ibid., pp. 148-149.
6. BR : 2/41-45,
7. BSNS, II, 1/2/9. and p. 33.
8. BR : 2/41-45 ; *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*. pp. 356-358.
9. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, pp. 307-308.
10. Ibid., pp. 344-347

no difference between the *Śravaṇaguru* and the *Śikṣāguru*.[1] There is still another *Guru* who imparts to the disciple the sacred *mantra* or syllable. Jīva Gosvāmin thus states a theory which is designed to resolve all conflicts between the different types of *Gurus*. A disciple might have several *Śravaṇagurus* or *Śikṣāgurus*. But he must have only one *Dīkṣāguru*.[2]

Later the *Dīkṣāguru* was honoured as God. Service to the *guru* was described as the fundamental duty of the *bhakta*. There could be no question of any personal relation between the devotee and the deity. The intermediacy of the *Guru* became an essential concept of *bhakti*. Devotion for the *Guru* was described as something more important than devotion for God. The devotee was not permitted to do anything without the *Guru's* advice. He was even asked to be a menial servant of the *Guru*.[3]

VII

The *bhakti*-aphorisms attach no importance to the cultivation of knowledge. Nārada sees no difference between the cultivation of knowledge and illicit sexual relation.[4] *Bhaktiratnāvalī* considers materialism a sin.[5] It is believed that a genuine devotee is not troubled by hunger and thirst.[6] Learning is useless to the inner man.[7] Intensity of devotion finally leads to the disintegration of intelligence and rationality.[8] Even the phenomenal world disappears when *bhakti* is intensified. Knowledge brings it back.[9] Creation is not the consequence of the intelligence of the living

1. Ibid,, p. 344.
2. Ibid.. p. 344.
3. These theories are stated in *Sri Śri Guruvaiṣṇavabhaktikusumānjalī*, by Gauragovīndānanda Bhāgavatasvāmī, pp. 6,9,14,25,28-29, 37-38.
4. BSNS, I, Sūtras 22,23,24.
5. BR. I/39-40.
6. BR. 4/26.
7. BR. 6/9.
8. BSNS. II, 3/2/6
9. BSNS. II, 3/2/6.

beings.[1] A real devotee does not even care for his wife and children.[2] He spends his whole life at home, singing the glory of god, and always eschews ambition.[3] Ambition and egoism are unnecessary because escape from the miseries of this world lies in *bhakti*.[4] Possession of *bhakti* is far superior even to the enjoyment of royal power.[5] A real devotee is very much like a friendless mendicant in a king's court. The mendicant is utterly dependent on the king's mercy.[6] Satisfaction, success and immortality stem from *bhakti*.[7] Remembrance of Kṛṣṇa destroys evils, removes bad luck, and promotes prosperity. It purifies the intellect, sharpens and widens knowledge, produces intuitive wisdom, and strengthens intellectual detachmant.[8] Knowledge means effort, but *bhakti* is effortless and spontaneous.[9] One may easily be a *bhakta* without reading the Vedas.[10] A hymn in praise of God may not invariably be composed according to the rules of poetics.[11] Life in this world is miserable because it is naturally centrifugal. As life moves away from God, it faces untold misery. *Bhakti* makes life centripetal; it takes life forward to God, who is the universal axis.[12] *Bhakti* is, therefore, the negation of individuality and federalism. It is the spiritual expression of the unitary idea.

VIII

A positive result of *bhakti* was the relaxation of caste-rules. Rituals were 'Vaiṣṇavised' is one form or another. The idea of

1. BSNS, II, p. 69.
2. BR ; 2/15-15.
3. BR : 2/23-24, 4/14
4. BR : 4/19
5. BR: 2/3
6. BSNS, I, Sūtra 31.
7. BSNS, I, Sūtra 4
8. BR : 6/8
9. BSNS, II, 2/1/1
10. BSNS, II, p. 4.
11. BR: 5/5-6.
12. *Bhaktisaṃdarbha*, pp, 3-6,

casteless *bhakti* was most vigorously pursued even by the *Śaktas*.[1] But the totally negative consequence of *bhakti* was the denigration of knowledge. It strengthened mysticism. It is argued that Rāmānuja considered the monistic doctrine of Śankara a philosophy which 'restricted worldly activity', and that he tried to remedy the fault by differentiating, so far as the authoritative texts permitted, between the soul and god, which should lead on to love for one's fellow-men.[2] But Rāmānuja, Nimvārka, Madhva, Vallabha and Caitanya preached a type of *bhakti* which led to the neglect of 'the aggressive side of the tradition".[3] One has to agree with Weber that *bhakti* did not result in "a drive toward the rational accumulation of property and the evaluation of capital", and that it created "irrational accumulation of chances for magicians and soul-shepherds, perbends for mystagogues and ritualistically or soteriologically oriented intellectual strata."[4] The intellectual urge was atrophied and the spirit of scientific enquiry stifled. Scepticism and the spirit of rational enquiry, without which no progress is possible, have no place in *bhakti*. The true *bhakta* was lost in the mystic contemplation of divine grace. It has been estimated that between the eighth century and the nineteenth century only 10001 scientific manuscripts were written in India. These manuscripts have been discovered. Of them as many as 4106 manuscripts were written on medicine.[5] Considering the length of time, the number seems to be rather insignificant. Perhaps the great popularity of the doctrines of *bhakti* throughout India made the spirit of scientific enquiry weak. Some importance was attached to medicine. But the other exact sciences were neglected.

1. Purṇānanda Paramahaṃsa, *Śāktakramaṃ* ed. R. M, Chattopadhyaya, pp. 6-7 : *Caṇḍālo Vā Sadā Pūjyo Kulapujāparo Yadi*...etc. The Tāntrikas are advised to adopt the manners of the Vaiṣṇavas during the performance of *Samayācāra* rituals.
2. P. Spratt. *Hindu Culture and Personality* : *A Psycho-Analytic Study*, p. 321.
3. Ibīd., p, 320,
4. *Religion of India*, p. 328.
5. Brochure on the *Bibliography*, published by the National Commission for the Compilation of History of Science in India, Indian National Science Academy, 1972, p. 2, and Table I.

Still another negative result of *bhakti* was, according to Swāmī Vivekānanda, the hardening of orthodoxy, which was discernible in the special position of the *gurus* or the 'soul-shepherds; sectarianism grew strong, and sectarian thinkers flung mud at one another.[1] *Bhakti* weakened social unity because each school of *bhakti* adopted a holier-than-thou attitude towards the other schools.

It has been claimed by Sukumar Sen that the Caitanya movement did not really enfeeble the Bengali race.[2] But the point is a debatable one. "The spirit of the new Vaisnavism", wrote Jadunath Sarkar, "had the closest affinity to that dreamy and emotional Bengali character and intensified these natural tendencies of our race...by its exaltation of pacifism and patient suffering, 'humility lower than that of the trodden grass, endurance greater than that of the felled tree',-it sapped the martial instinct of the race and made the people too soft to conduct national defence".[3] According to Gait the Assamese rulers were alarmed by the spread of Vaiṣṇavism in Assam, lest it might lead to the emasculation of of the Assamese people. King Gadādhar Singh of Assam (1681-1696) tried very hard to break the power of the Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins, and popularise non-vegetarianism.[4] Rākhāldās Banerji, too, ascribes the political downfall of the Orissa kingdom to the non-violent Vaiṣṇavism of the Orissan monarchy at a time when the Muhammadan imperialists were extremely violent.[5] But this view is opposed by Prabhāt Mukhopādhyāya and Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda.[6] R.D. Banerji wrote: "Chaitanya was one of the principal causes of the political decline of the empire and the people

1. Swāmī Vivekānanda, *Bhaktiyoga*, p. 6.
2. In *Madhyayuger Bāṅglā O Bāṅgālī*, pp. 22-23. Sen wrote that the Bengalis were enfeebled by the Caitanya movement. But quite different opinion is found in *Bāṅgalā Sāhītyer Itihās*, I, I, pp. 321-322.
3. *History of Bengal*, II, pp. 221f.
4. Gait: *History of Assam*, pp. 168, 184 ; N. K. Basu, *Assam in the Ahom Age*, p. 56.
5. R. D. Banerji, *History of Orissa*, I, pp. 330-31, 336.
6. P. Mukherji, *The History of Mediaeval Vaishnavism in Orissa* Ch. XI, pp 177-178, Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda, *Śrikṣetra*, pp. 56-65.

of Orissa: not only that; the acceptance of Vaishnavism or rather neo-Vaishnavism was the real cause of the Musalman conquest of Orissa twenty-eight years after the demise of Prataparudra..... Neo-Vaishnavism became fashionable and powerful officers of Prataparudra like Ramananda Raya...and Gopinath Barajena... were the most notable converts after the king himself...The decline of the power and prestige of Orissa is solely due to the national adoption of the sublime Bhakti-marga of Chaitanya". Prabhāt Mukherji does not accept this view. According to him "the real cause of the fall of the empire was not the "acceptance of Neo-Vaishnavism", but the weakness of the "successors". Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda says that those historians who try to make Caitanya or *bhakti* responsible for the downfall of the Orissan state are but 'misinformed' materialists, who do not consider the fact that Orissan culture was tremendously strengthened by the Caitanya movement.

"Bhakti", says J.N. Farquhar, "...is a surging emotion which chokes the speech, makes the tears flow and the hair thrill with pleasurable excitement, and often leads to hysterical laughing and weeping by turns, to sudden fainting fits, and to long trances of unconsciousness".[1] The *Kīrtana* was designed to take the devotee to the farthest limits of ecstasy. The following is an eye-witness account of a 'mass'-*Kīrtana*, the main figure of which was Gosvāmin Vijayakṛṣṇa, a famous religious and social leader of nineteenth century Bengal:[2]

> "The Bāuls and the Vaiṣṇavas saw the trembling figure of the Gosvāmin (Vijayakṛṣṇa) and began to sing the *Kīrtana*. Many drums and cymbals were simultaneously being played upon. The tremendous sound had a thrilling effect. The Gosvāmin at first danced to the tune. But suddenly he jumped up, caught hold of Lāl, a young boy, and began an ecstatic dance. The boy Lāl grew more and more ecstatic. He somehow came out of the Gosvāmin's hug, and just danced a jig. The Gosvāmin cast a fierce look at him and, like a veritable wrestler, began to beat upon his own arms. Keeping watch on the Gosvāmin

1. *An Outline of Religious Literature of India*, p. 230.
2. Kuladānanda Brahmacārī, *Śri Śri Sadgurusaṇga*, I, pp, 70-71. The five volumes of this work contain many similar accounts of ecstasy.

the boy went on dancing. The Gosvāmin let out a terrific roar, closed his fist, stretched it towards the boy, and imitated the efforts of a bow-man about to draw up his bow. He took a few steps towards the boy and then came back to his original position. Once again he roared and advanced towards the boy who, too, spread out his left arm in the form of a shield and tried to evade the Gosvāmin. He danced back to a spot 25-30 yards off from the position of the Gosvāmin, who at once retreated 25-30 yards back. The boy, too, let out a roar and leaped forward towards the Gosvāmin. The Gosvāmin now yelled...and came forward in a menacing manner. The boy at once retreated to his original position. This advance and retreat went on for a pretty long time. Śrīdhara (a disciple of Vijayakṛṣṇa Gosvāmin, who was occasionally insane) now took up the big, hot, smoking incense-burner, and began to dance like a mad man. He suddenly advanced towards the Gosvāmin carrying the incense-burner aloft...but the Gosvāmin ran. This scene caused a veritable pandemonium. People began to faint'. (Translated.)

IX

It must, however, be said that in a conservative society controlled by the Brāhmaṇas *bhakti* represented a liberal principle. As a principle *bhakti* was above the caste-system. The caste of a *bhakta* was not a considerable factor. This was a challenge to the caste hierarchy, and this explains the hostility of the conservative Brāhmaṇas towards the Caitanya movement in Navadvīpa. *Bhakti* was basically unritualistic. In fact no ritual was prescribed for the *natural bhakta* lost in the ecstatic and mystic contemplation of the deity. The list of rituals ascribed to Caitanya's authorship looks quite simple in comparison with such works as *Varṣakṛyākaumudī* and *Aṣṭāvīṃśatitattvāni*. Moreover, many points of *Sadācāra* or good conduct have been ritualised in the list. *Bhakti* was not absolutely free from rituals. But rituals for the sake of rituals did not constitute its *desiderata*. A system of good conduct was tagged to the rituals, and this lent speciality to the Vaiṣṇava *bhakti*-rituals.

Bhakti is regarded by S.K. De as something unethical. He wrote : "All ethics becomes lost in religious rapture and no act,

except devotional act, counts".[1] But the point is that *bhakti*, as enunciated in the works cited, does not imply any violation of the moral principles and ethical conduct. The spiritual individuality of the devotee is emphasized. The individual's right to worship his deity without violating morality and ethical rules of conduct cannot be considered unethical. De understood this point, and then continued his attack in another manner. He wrote : "Emotion in itself is not to be deprecated; it should take its proper place in every religious system; but, to save it from morbidity, it must be related to will and intellect, to life and reality".[2] He next says that there is not "much intellectual virility in the Caitanya movement".[3]

But that the Caitanya movement, a *bhakti*-movement, brought about a glorious literary renaissance, and also a brilliant architectural renaissance, is a very well-known fact. The society itself grew mobile. Literacy was spread among the low-caste people. Brahmanical *smṛti* and the tradition of *Pancopāsanā* had not produced comparable results. This shows that the *bhakti*-movement of Caitanya was, at least in its initial stages, neither "morbid", nor intellectually supine. Had it been so, it would not have produced a single positive result. The principle of individuality implied by *bhakti* was quite dynamic. It lent vitality to the moribund society in Bengal. Emotion was necessary for a people downtrodden for many centuries. Emotion made them courageous and creative. Without it the wonderful literary and architectural renaissance would not have occurred at all. "Especially for the Chaitanyas", writes Max Weber, "the basis of *bhakti* was recognised to be the coarse sexual orgiasticism of the masses, accompanying cultivation of the earth, and thereby was itself of a sexual-orgiastic character".[4] Weber does not know that Caitanya and the gosvāmins of

1. *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement* : p. 546.
2. Ibid., p. 547.
3. *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, p. 547.
4. *The Religion of India*, p. 308.

Vṛndāvana never preached mere eroticism. In fact they preached the virtues of the ascetic way of life. *Madhurarati*, no doubt, is an erotic concept. But the *Madhurarati*-contemplation was not compulsory for all *bhaktas*. They could freely worship Kṛṣṇa as a Master, as a Friend, and even as their Son. Sexual orgiasticism was not the ideal or the aim of the *bhakti* movement of Caitanya. Even Weber admits that "the true *bhakta* adherent preserved himself in the love of god finally in the absence of unpure thought and drives, particularly anger, envy, desire. This inner purity gave *certitudo salutis*...This occurred particularly in the intellectual strata".[1]

The *bhakti* movement of Caitanya emphasized the theory of surrender of the self to God or to the *Guru*. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava devotee was, according to S.N. Dasgupta, advised to absolve God of the responsibility for his own misery, because God "cannot have experience of it; and so, in spite of God's omnipotence, yet, since He has no experience of the suffering of men, He connot be accused of cruelty in not releasing everyone from his suffering...When God tries to satisfy the desires of His devotee, he is not actuated by an experience of suffering, but by an experience of the devotion existing in the devotee".[2] Thus, no trust is placed in the *bhakta's* individual capacity to effect either material or spiritual improvement. Only his *bhakti* is active. All other things are passive. This doctrine could not bring about any social or economic revolution. *Bhakti* is regarded by an interpreter of Hinduism as "an accurate reflection of the chronic helplessness of the Indian masses".[3]

It is believed that *bhakti* greatly influenced the rise of Maratha power. Ancient authority and tradition had been petrified in Western Indian regions in what Mahadev Govinda Ranade described as "the monopoly of the Brahmin caste". "It was

1. Weber, op. cit., p, 309.
2. *A History of Indian Philosophy*, IV, p. 411.
3. Richard Lannoy, *The Speaking Tree : A Study of Indian Culture and Society*, p. 291.

against the exclusive spirit of this caste domination that the saints and prophets struggled most manfully to protest. They asserted the dignity of the human soul..."[1] But in the teachings of the *bhakti*-saints of Mahārāṣtra there was no stress on the worth of secular life. "The leaders of the *bhakti* movement were primarily interested in the dissemination of the values of Hinduism (which had till then remained confined to the Brahmana castes) among the lower and middle castes through expressing them in a language, and in an idiom comprehensible to the common people. They sought to create social cohesion by directing the allegiance of the various castes to a common corpus of religious values."[2] The aim of *bhakti* was to create "social cohesion" (and not social revolution), not only in Māharāṣtra, but also in Bengal.

1. M. G. Ranade, *Rise of Maratha Power*, Reprint, Delhī, 1961, pp. 66-67.
2. Ravinder Kumar, "The New Brahmanas of Maharashtra" in *Soundings in Modern South Asian History*. ed. D. Low, pp. 120-121.

CHAPTER V

THE FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL IDEAS OF THE GAUḌĪYA VAIṢṆAVAS

I

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology was really the formulation of Sanātana Gosvāmin, Rūpa Gosvāmin, their nephew Jīva Gosvāmin and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, author of CCM. Caitanya himself is not known to have writtten anything on the subject. According to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Sanātana Gosvāmin learnt the basic points from Caitanya.[1] The *Sādhyasādhana* theory was elaborated both by Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya.[2] Later Jīva Gosvāmin stated the fundamental concepts in six *Saṃdarbhas*. The works of Sanātana, Rūpa, Jīva and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja contain specific concepts, the combination of which may be described as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology. Recently these various concepts have been separately studied and evaluated.[3]

But it must be noted at the very outset that, although the texts of the gosvāmins were accepted as unchallengeable dogma of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order, yet there were other theological standpoints which were quite different from those of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins. Advaita Ācārya, Nityānanda, Narahari Sarkār, Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Kavi Karṇapūra had ideas which were not sufficiently emphasized in the works of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins. It is rather necessary for us to note that the theological concepts found in Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's CCM are seldom found or discussed in Vṛndāvana Dāsa's CBH. The

1. CCM : pp. 29, and 405 : *Ei Mata Mahāprabhu Dui Māsa Paryanta|Śikhāyila Tāre Bhaktisiddhāntera Anta.*
2. The *Sādhyasādhana* theory was elaborated by Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya. CCM, Madhyalīlā. Ch. 8.
3. Vide, J. N. Sinha, *The Philosophy and Religion of Caitanya and His Followers.*

ideas of the Bengali leaders mentioned above are explained in the following chapters.

The gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana established a connection between the Caitanya movement and the ancient Vaiṣṇava myths. They postulated a sectarian interpretation of *bhakti* and the Vedānta, and bestowed on the Caitanya movement the respectable mantle of Brāhmaṇical philosophy, They delineated the rules and the rituals of the evolving sect and instilled into it both ritualistic discipline and a sort of episcopalianism. The new Vṛndāvana rituals were a powerful answer to the Brāhmaṇical charge that the Caitanya movement was un-Brāhmaṇical and non-ritualistic. The *Smārtas* later recognised the validity and distinctiveness of these rituals and even assigned to them a niche in their own ritual compendia.[1] The gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana performed these enormous tasks roughly within a time-span of fifty years.

In Bengal *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Haribhaktivilāsa* of Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin, Sanātana Gosvāmin's commentary on the tenth *skandha* of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* and *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi* were accepted as basic texts. However, the intricate scholasticism of Jīva Gosvāmin did not evidently gain much popularity in Bengal. The whole tenor of the Caitanya movement in Bengal was against scholastic philosophy. The texts of the Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins were, no doubt, cultivated in Bengal by scholarly Vaiṣṇavas. But to the ordinary Bengali followers of Caitanya these difficult texts were incomprehensible. In Bengal the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and the earlier *Caitanyabhāgavata* of Vṛndāvana Dāsa were regarded as the fundamental texts both by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and by the deviant Vaiṣṇava groups.[2] Written in brilliant Bengali, aglow with devotional fervour, heavily

1. *Vaiṣṇavācāra* in Vol. III of *Kṛyākāṇḍavāridhi* ed. Satīsh Chandra Mukhopādhyāya, Vasumatī Sāhityā Mandir, Calcutta, 1924, pp. 527 f.
2. The differences in the theological views expressed in the works of these two biographers are explained in Section v of Ch. 7 of this dissertation.

loaded with scholasticism, which was presented in elegant verses, *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* had great value both as a biography and a remarkable philosophical work. It could be written only by a genius. Senātana and the other gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana, who are supposed to have received advice and instructions from Caitanya, show a half-hidden carelessness about him. They have written a few adulatory verses on him in Sanskrit, which do not constitute the evidence of any conscious effort on their part to acknowledge their indebtedness to him. *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* was the first and the foremost work of its kind in which the philosophy and the theology of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins were attached to Caitanya's biography. There are different opinions about the date of its composition. Since it is rather difficult to fix the exact date we may safely say that the work was completed towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries.[1] One important feature of this biography of Caitanya is that the man Caitanya has scarcely any significance in it. In the main, *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* states and explains the theories about Kṛṣṇa propounded by the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins. But the link between Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa is the running theme of this work; this theme made it the most authoritative dissertation on the philosophy and the theology of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sect. The main sources of Kṛṣṇadāsa's information were the earlier biographies of Caitanya and the undiscovered *Kaḍacā* or notes of Svarūpa Dāmodara.[2] The following account of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy is based mainly on Kṛṣṇadāsa's interpretations.

1. Sukumar Sen argues that CCM was written between 1560 and 1580. *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*. I, 1, pp. 350-354 , also, CCM. ed. Sukumar Sen, Introduction, p. 17. The oldest MS of CCM is dated A. D. 1613. Introduction to CCM, p. 17. Rādhāgovinda Nāth thinks that CCM was written in A. D. 1615 ; *Śrīcaitanyacartāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 29. Sukhamaya Mukhopādhyāya writes that it was actually written in June 1612 : *Madhyayuger Bānglā Sāhityer Tathya O Kālakram*, p. 201.
2. CCM : indebtedness to six gosvāmins who are described as teacher-*gurus*, p. i ; indebtedness to Svarūpa Dāmodara, pp. 16-17 ; to Vṛndāvana Dāsa, pp. 37-38 ; indebtedness to Murāri Gupta, p. 65.

II

The rationale of the Caitanya movement was sought in a novel interpretation of *Pramāṇa* or theological and philosophical evidence. The exposition of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theory of *Pramāṇa* is found in Jīva Gosvāmin's *Tattvasaṃdarbha* and Valadeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa's commentary on it. According to this work *Pramāṇa* would be considered unimpeachable if it is derived from, or based upon, *Śruti* or Vedic-Upaniṣadic literature. Jīva Gosvāmin has no fascination for direct evidence which may be vitiated by erroneous judgement.[1] A verse quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* emphasizes this standpoint, and throws light on the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava attitude towards *Śruti*.[2]

This verse explains the *filial relation* between Vedic-Upaniṣadic literature, the so-called Institutes, Mythology, and History. According to Jīva Gosvāmin the most perfect evidence is the *Word* (*Śavda*) as revealed in the *Śruti*.[3] But since *Śruti* is incomprehensible in the decadent *Kali*-age, *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas* were composed for the interpretation of the Vedas.[4] It is important to note that Jīva Gosvāmin attaches greater value to the *Purāṇas* (Mythologies) than to *Itihāsas* (Histories).[5] But the *Purāṇas* describe the worship of many gods and goddesses. The poor mortals of the *Kaliyuga* may not know which god or goddess they should worship for their spiritual salvation.[6] The

1. *Tattvasaṃdarbha*, p. 14, Statement 7 : *Tatra Puruṣasya Bhramādidoṣacatustayaduṣtattvāt Sutarāmalaukikācintyasvabhāvavastusparśayogyattvācca Tatpratyakṣādīnyapi Sadoṣāṇi.*
2. CCM, Kālnā edition, pp. 522-523. *Śrutir Mātā Pṛṣtādiśati Bhavadārādhanāvidhih| Yathā Māturvāṃ Smṛtirapitatha Bhaginīṃ| Purāṇādaya Ye Vā Sahajanivahā te Tadanugā|Atah Satyaṃ Jnātaṃ Muraharabhāvaneva Śaraṇah||*
3. *Tattvasṃdarbha*, p. 24, Statement 10 : *...Veda Evāsmākaṃ Sarvātīta-sarvāśraya-sarvācintyāścaryasvabhāvaṃ Vastu Vividiṣatāṃ Pramāṇaṃ.*
4. Ibid., p. 36, Statement 12 : *Tatra Ca Vedaśavdasya Saṃprati Duṣpāratvād Duradhigamārthatvācca Tadarthanirṇāyakānāṃ Munīnāmapi Parasparavirodhāt Vedarūpo Vedārthanirṇāyakaścetihāsa-purāṇātmakah Śavda Eva Vicāraniyah.*
5. *Tattvasamdarbha* : p. 62, Statement 16 : *Tatrāpi Purāṇasyaiva Garimā Dṛśyate*, etc.
6. Ibid., p. 66 Statement 17.

Purāṇas are of three types, corresponding to three types of mentalities, namely, the *Sāttvika* mentality or spiritual mentality, the *Rājasika* mentality, or the refined, civilised, worldly mentality, and the *Tāmasika* mentality or the 'dark' mentality.[1] The *Sāttvika* mentality is reflected in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, which contains the best statement of the 'word'-evidence as revealed in the *Brahmasūtra*.[2] But Jīva Gosvāmin does not show how did the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* interpret either the spirit of the *Vedas* or the Vedic texts. He fastened on the *Bhāgavatpurāṇa* a typically sectarian interpretation. Since the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* describes Kṛṣṇa as Supreme God, Kṛṣṇa, and no other God or Goddess should be worshipped in the *Kaliyuga*. But Jīva Gosvāmin's emphasis on the theological reliability of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* perhaps owed its origin to the undeniable fact that the basic concepts of the Caitanya order could not have been stated in the *Śruti* literature. Jīva Gosvāmin, therefore, found a suitable substitute for *Śruti* in the Vaiṣṇava mythologies of the post-Christian times. Of these the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* was the most distinguished because it had given the Kṛṣṇa legend a soteriological character. This *Purāṇa* was regarded as Vyāsadeva's own commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*. Secondly, Śrīdhara Svāmin's commentary on the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* provided for the theologians of the Caitanya order a contemporary theological apparatus. This commentary was improved upon by Jīva Gosvāmin in *Kramasaṃdarbha*. But his emphasis on *Purāṇic* evidence resulted in the circumscription of evidence within the limits of a few Vaiṣṇava *Purāṇas*.

III

The most important point of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is *bhakti*. In *Caitanyacaritāmrta bhakti* is described as a factor which makes both God and His devotee capable of enjoying indescribable bliss.[3] *Bhakti* is not simple devotion. It is the intensi-

1. Ibid., p. 68. Statement 18.
2. Ibid., p. 80, Statement 21.
3. CCM, p. 27 : "*Kṛṣṇamādhuryera Eka Adbhuta Svabhāva|Āpānā Āsvādite Kṛṣṇa Kare Bhaktabhāva||*

fication of devotion to a degree where the devotee is blissfully aware of the establishment of a personal relation between God and himself. This personal relation is mystic, and, therefore, indescribable. *Bhakti* lends immeasurable strength to the intuition of God.

Bhakti is of two types which are intimately related to each other. The first type is *Vaidhi* (regular) *bhakti*. The main rituals of *Vaidhi Bhakti* are *Śravaṇa*, (Listening to God's name), *Kīrtana* (Singing of devotional hymns), *Smaraṇa* (Remembrance of God), *Pūjana* (Ritual worship of God), *Vandana* (Adoration of God), *Paricaryā* (Service to God), *Dāsya* (Self-appointment in service to God), *Sakhya* (Friendship for God), and *Ātmanivedana* (Dedication of the Self to God). These activities are considered 'regular' because these are sanctioned by the scriptures.[1]

The second type of *bhakti* is called *Rāgānugā Bhakti*. Its significance consists in an almost unbearable thirst (*tṛṣṇā*) for the adored God, which gradually leads to the fullest and the deepest absorption of the self in Him. But this absorption does not mean the drowning of the devotee's individuality in the cosmic vastness of God's individuality. The devotee merely stands on the shore of the cosmic vastness and contemplates God's majesty. *Rāgānugā Bhākti* has been described as something placed just on the shore or brink of God's universal vastness. *Rāgānugā Bhakti* may, therefore, lead to spiritual brinkmanship, since this *bhakti* is *tatastha*, on the brink.[2] *Rāgānugā Bhakti* does not have to conform to scriptural arrangements or institutional requirements. *Vaidhi Bhakti* is the outward expression of *Rāgānugā Bhakti*. In its mystic, inward form, *Rāgānugā Bhakti* means the worship of Kṛṣṇa as a Servant, Friend, Parent, Maid-Servant or Extramarital Lover.[3] There is a

1. CCM, pp. 384-85 : The *Vaidhi Bhakta* is advised to give up his caste-rituals : "*Esava Chāḍi Āra Varṇāśrama Dharma| Akincana Haiyā Laya Kṛṣṇera Śaraṇa||*
2. CCM, p. 386 ; *Iṣte Gāḍa Tṛṣṇā Rāga Svarupa Lakṣmaṇa| Iṣte Āviṣtatā Tatastha Lakṣmaṇa.*
3. CCM, p. 386 : "*Dasā, Sakhā, Pitrādi Preyasīra Gaṇa| Rāgamârge Nija Nija Bhāvera Gaṇana||*

a definite link between *Viśvāsa* (Faith) and *bhakti*. Insight, born of Faith, and strengthened by *bhakti*, is far more fruitful than Logic or Rationalism.[1]

IV

Kṛṣṇa (as God) is conceived of as the Supreme Being.[2] But in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, God has a human form, because his *Naralīlā* or human behaviour is considered the best of all other divine states.[3] Everything pertaining to Kṛṣṇa as an attribute, feature or function is the essence of pure bliss. Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of Upaniṣadic *Rasa, Ānanda, Bliss*.[4] Being absolute bliss, Kṛṣṇa eternally revels in revelries in his abode or *Dhāma* which is identifiable with Vṛndāvana. He has both male and female companions who are the manifestations or materialisations of his bliss-conscious attributes.[5] Kṛṣṇa's human body is eternal, perfect, and non-material[6] Kṛṣṇa is beyond the concepts of time and space, and above physical and moral laws. He is *Sat*, (Existence Absolute), *Cit* (Consciousness Absolute), and *Ānanda* (Bliss Absolute). *Ānanda* or Bliss is the essence of Kṛṣṇa-Brahman. *Sat* and *Cit* are his attributes.[7] Kṛṣṇa has three powers, namely, *Svarūpa Śakti* (Sentient Power), *Māyā Śakti* (Non-sentient Power), and *Jīva Śakti* (Marginal Power).[8]

1. CCM, p. 194 : *Alaukika Līlā Ei Parama Niguḍa| Viśvāse Pāiye Tarke Haya Vahudūra||*
   This statement seems to be the literal translation of "*Namo Bhaktaikalabhyâya Tarkadūrāya Te Namah*", Verse 10, p. 20, *Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa.*
2. *Brahmasaṃhītā* (ed. Arthur Avalon) ; *P.*1 : *Īśvarah Paramah Kṛṣṇah Saccidānandavigrahah| Anadirādir Govindah Sarvakāraṇākāraṇaṃ.||*
3. CCM : p. 374 : *Kṛṣṇera Yateka Līlā| Sarvottama Naralīlā| Naravapu Tāhāra Svarūpa | Gopaveśa Veṇukara | Navakiśora Natavara | Nityalīlāra Haya Anurūpa ||*
4. *Sarvasaṃvādinī*, pp. 29, 163-168.
5. BR. p. 71, verse 12 ; *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 83-84, 88-89.
6. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 85.
7. CCM : pp. 13-14 : *Saccidānandapurṇa Kṛṣnera Svarūpa | Ekai Ciccakti Tāra Dhare Tina Rūpa | Anandāmśe Hlādinī Sadaṃśe Sandhinī | Cidaṃśe Saṃvit Yāre Jnāna Kari Māni ||*
8. CCM : pp. 161-162.

His *Svarūpa Śakti* makes it possible for him to indulge in revelries. His *Māyā Śakti* brings the phenomenal world into existence. His *Jīva Śakti* makes life and the process of living a continuous reality. But marginal power is subject to the control of the sentient and the non-sentient powers. The Sentient power makes it possible for Kṛṣṇa to sport with the wives of other persons.

Caitanya himself is regarded as the earliest exponent of this mystic theory of powers. Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, the celebrated Vedāntic scholar, was so deeply moved by Caitanya's masterly exposition of this theory that he immediately accepted it without asking any question.[1]

The general theory of *Yoga* signifies the fusion of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul of God. But this theory is rejected by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.[2] They do not have the slightest desire to be a part of God, or even to be equal to God Himself. As once Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa put it, it is far better to be an eater of of sugar than to be sugar itself. Hācan Rājā, a famous Bāul-mystic of Sylhet, once said: "I have been asking people for the identity of Kānāi (Kṛṣṇa). I have been deliberating on this point for a long time. And now I have come to the conclusion that I myself am Kānāi".[3] This conclusion militates against the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava concept of the relation between *Jīva* (life-entity) and God. Love conceived for God is considered far superior to *Mokṣa* or Liberation.[4] Love of God is the *Pancamapuruṣārtha* or the fifth fundamental object of human life. The other four objects are

1. CCM: 161-162: *Śuni Bhattācārya Haila Parama Vismiṭa | Mukhe Nā Nihsare Vāṇi Haila Sṭambhiṭa ||*
2. *Caitanyacariṭāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 184.
3. Dīnendra Chaudhuri, *Pūrva Bānglār Lokasaṃgīt*, p, 147: "*Bhāvanā Cintā Kairā Dekhlāṃ Hācan Ye Kānāi*". This is a Sūfi theory, propounded by al-Hallaj and Bayazid. Vide, Roma Chaudhuri, *Sufism and Vedānta*, pp. 55-61, 117-125.
4. The establishment of the superiority of *bhakti* over *mukti* or final release is said to be the best contribution of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism to the spiritual culture of India. Pramathanāth Tarkabhuṣaṇ, *Bānglār Vaiṣṇava Darśaṇ*, p. 169.

Dhārma (Cultivation of Religion and Ethics), *Artha* (Acquisition of Wealth), *Kāma* (Satisfaction of Desire), and *Mokṣa* (Final Liberation). *Prīti*, or Love conceived for God, is the basis of Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava religion. The devotee's love of God ls *Ahetuki* or unsullied by egotistic ambition.[1] It is absolutely *Niṣkāma* or 'disinterested'. This love is unconditional, unqualified, and unambiguous. This love is not for the attainment of heavenly happiness or *mokṣa* because the true lover of God does not see any difference between heaven and hell, and between hell and final liberation.[2] Self-manifest,[3] this *Prīti* is beyond injunctions, sanctions and extraneous impulse.[4] It is said that a deep current of love flows down from Vṛndāvana, the eternal abode of Kṛṣṇa. The current reaches the soul of the devotee through an intangible medium, which is normally stationed in Vṛndāvana, and which sometimes comes down to earth out of cosmic depth to save mortals lost in materialism.[5]

V

There are six well-defined stages of love born of devotion.[6]

In the beginning the humble devotee is absorbed in the contemplation of the infinite ocean of Kṛṣṇa's supernatural lustre It is the stage which is, curiously enough, described as the stage of *Brahmānanda* or the joy of being drowned in Kṛṣṇa-Brahman's supernatural effulgence.

1. CCM : p. 32 : *Kṛṣṇaviṣayaka Prema Paramapuruṣārtha | Yāra Āge Tṛṇatulya Cāri Puruṣārtha || Pancama Puruṣārtha Premānandāmṛtasindhu | Mokṣādi Ānanda Yāra Nahe Eka Viudu.||*; also *Prītisaṃdarbha*, p. 13.
2. CCM : p. 355 : "*Svarga Mokṣa Kṛṣṇabhakta Naraka Kari Māne*".
3. *Prītisaṃdarbha*, p. 331-332 : *Animitta Phalābhisandhiśūnya Svābhāvikī Svarasatā Eva Viṣyasaundaryādayatnenaiva Jāyamāna Na Ca Valādāpadyamāna. Sā Bhāgavatī Bhaktih Prītirityarthah.*
4. Pramathanāth Tarkabhuṣaṇ, op, cit, pp. 18-19, 223-224.
5. G.N. Mallik, *The Philosophy of Vaiṣṇava Religion*, I, pp. 267-268.
6. CCM : p. 354 : *Bhaktibhede Ratibheda Pancaparakāra| Śāntarati Dāsyarati Sakhyarati Āra.| Vātsalyarati Madhurarati Pancavibheda.|.. Śānta Dāsya Sakhya Vātsalya Madhura Rasa Nāma.| Kṛṣṇabhaktirasamadhye E Pancapradhāna.||* Vide, BSNS, I, pp. 31-32.

The second stage is that of the realisation of Brahman in the form of four-armed Nārāyaṇa. This is the stage of *Śāntaraṭi* or *Paramātmasphūrṭi*. It is the stage of devotion recollected in tranquillity and spiritual knowledge.[1]

The third and the next higher stage is that of *Premabhakṭi* or *Dāsyaraṭi*. At this stage the devotee feels that he is a servant of God. He contemplates the indescribable splendour of Kṛṣṇa. The relation between Kṛṣṇa and the devotee is characterised by veneration (*Saṃbhrama*) on the part of the devotee and condescension on the part of Kṛṣṇa. *Saṃbhrama* implies total effacement of the ego.[2]

But the feeling of extreme inferiority consequent on the contemplation of God's splendour, and the total obliteration of ego may impede the flow of such devotion as may contribute to God's *Ānanda* or joy. Hence *Sakhyaraṭi* or Love born of Friendship is conceived. This love means friendly affection between two persons who are equal to each other in all respects. Kṛṣṇa has some friends in Vṛndāvana who are not inferior to him in any respect. But so great and deep is their affection for him that some of them even ply a fan while he enjoys bliss on a flower-bed in the close embrace of a milkmaid.[3]

The next higher stage is that of *Vātsalyaraṭi* or parental affection. A devotee may regard Kṛṣṇa as his son. The esoteric significance of such relationship is that it considerably diminishes the cosmic greatness of God. When Kṛṣṇa, the beloved baby of Yaśodā, shows her the starry universe in the tiny cavity of his mouth simply by the ruse of a yawn, she merely considers the exhibition the symptom of a disease caused by the evil eye. The same exhibition nearly stunned Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa's friend.[4] It should be noted here that *Vātsalyaraṭi*-worship grew popular in Bengal.

1. *Prīṭisaṃdarbha*, pp. 452-488.
2. Ibid., pp. 489-509.
3. *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, p. 16 : Vide, the category of *Priyanarmasakhā*.
4. The marvellous yawn of baby Kṛṣṇa is described in Kavi Karṇapūra's *Ānandāvṛndāvanacampū*, Ch. 5, p. 105.

A good number of Vaiṣṇavas worship the *Vālagopāla* icon, generally made of brass, representing a baby supporting his weight on his knees and hands. Even Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa practised it for some time. He worshipped the boy Rāma as an indulgent father.[1] Vijayakṛṣṇa Gosvāmin found in Navadvipa an old man and an old woman who worshipped both Caitanya and Nityānanda as their five-year-old sons.[2]

The highest stage of devotional love is that of *Madhuraraṭi*, which signifies the love of lovers, and in which the basic qualities of the other *raṭis* are found.[3] But love conceived for Kṛṣṇa is unsullied by libido. When Kṛṣṇa sports with his sweethearts he assumes the form of an exceptionally beautiful, black, and adolescent boy. In the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* Kṛṣṇa's dalliance with the beautiful ladies of *Vrajadhāma* has been compared to the play of a frisky child with his own image.[4]

VI

Neither Kṛṣṇa's loves, nor his unending adolescence can be comprehensible by simple reasoning. His love-games seem libidinous. But really there is no sexuality in them. His sweethearts are his bliss-conscious attributes who have the semblance of exceptionally pretty and eternally adolescent milkmaids. Libido drives material beings towards egocentric hankering for the pleasure of orgasm. But the love of the bliss-attributes, which is highly relished by Kṛṣṇa, God, is absolutely free from dirt and smut. This love is the

1. Swāmī Sāradānanda, *Rāmakṛṣṇalīlāprasanga*, II, pp. 51-53, "Gopāler Mā" pp. 230f.
2. Tāriṇī Charaṇ Chaudhuri, *Sadguru Śrī Śrī Vijayakṛṣṇa*, pp. 434-35; Kuladānanda Brahmacārī, *Śrī Śrī Sadgurusanga*, V. pp. 308-309.
3. CCM: p. 182: *Guṇādhikye Svādādhikye Vāḍe Prati Rase.| Śānta Dāsya Sakhya Vātsalyera Guṇa Madhurete Vaise.||*
4. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa, Skandha* 10, Chapter 33, verse 17: *Reme Rameśo Vrajasundaribhir| Yathārbhakah Svapratīvimvavibhramah||*

absolute negation of carnality.[1] This type of *bhakti*-love is described by a modern psychologist as "projective extroversion". "Projective extroversion is an identification of the ego with the universe and complete domination of the psyche by the libido. The result is love for everybody and everything equally".[2] Very possibly this mystic love cannot be explained easily by a psycho-analytic formula. If one does not 'love' God in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava manner, one may not comprehend the nature of that love.

The Upaniṣads affirm that God is *Rasa*.[3] The word *Rasa* has twenty meanings.[4] In the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava context it may mean 'Relish', 'Love', 'A Feeling of Love', 'Pleasure', 'Emotion', or simply 'Sap' or 'Juice'. When *Jīva*, or Life-entity, becomes capable or realising *Rasa*, it not only reaches the highest stage of evolution, but also becomes capable of realising something *splendid*, which is too deep for words, because *Rasa* is God.[5] The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas believe that the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* is nothing but the elaboration of the *Rasa*-concept of *Śruti*. Kṛṣṇa is the transcendental *Rasika*, or appreciator of excellence or beauty.

Bhaktirasa may mean the 'juice' that real dovotion yields. Both the Sūfis and the Nātha-Yogīs refer to a 'juice' or a 'type of nectar'

1. CCM ; p. 17 ; *"Gopīgaṇera Prema Ruḍa Mahābhāva Nāma.| Viśuddha Nirmala Preme Kabhu Nahe Kāma.|| Kāma Prema Dohākāra Vibhinna Lakṣaṇa.| Lauha Āra Hema Yaiche Svarūpa Vilakṣaṇa.|| Ātmendriyaprīti Icchā Tāre Vali Kāma.| Kṛṣṇendriya Prīti Icchā Dhare Prema Nāma.|| Kāmera Tātparya Nija Saṃbhoga Kevala.| Kṛṣṇasukhatātparya Prema Haya Makāvala...Ataeva Kāma Preme Vahuta Antara.| Kāma Andhatama Prema Nirmala Bhāsvara.||*
2. P. Spratt, *Hindu Culture and Personality*, pp. 328-329.
3. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* ; 2|7, *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 75-76.
4. V.S. Apte, *The Students' Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1965, p. 465. According to D.H.H. Ingalls, *rasa* means "mood", or "flavour" or "taste". *Sanskrit Poetry from Vidyākara's "Treasury"*, pp. 11, 14. *Rasika*, according to him, means a "literary connoisseur", p. 14.
5. The evolutionary theory of the *Jīva*-entity is postulated in *Samagra Śrī Srī Caitanyaśikṣāmṛta* by Bhaktivinoda Thākura or Kedarnāth Dutta, who was deeply influenced by Darwin. Vide, pp. 8-10, 40-43; Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda, *Gauḍīya Darśaner Tulanāmūlak Itihās*, introduction, pp, 8-12.

which is generated in the palate of the mouth if the *bhakti* really becomes intense.[1] But there is also *Kāvyarasa* or the 'juice' of poetry. Whereas *Bhaktirasa* is the result of the intuition of God and His sports, *Kāvyarasa*, blemished by the human touch, is transient and insignificant. Unrecognised in classical aesthetics, *Bhaktirasa* is yet immeasurably superior to *Kāvyarasa*.[2]

There is some difference of opinion about the exact location of *Rasa*. According to classical aesthetics it is located in the reader, the spectator, or the audience who are known as the *Sāmājika*, or "member of an audience or assembly, a spectator at an assembly or meeting".[3] According to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, *Rasa* is located in Kṛṣṇa, who is the transcendental *Rasika*. The human enjoyment of *Rasa* is rendered possible only through his grace. Realisation of Kṛṣṇa or Śyāma signifies the enjoyment of *Bhaktirasa* in the best sense of the term.

VII

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas ascribe the same potency to *Rasa* as they do to *Prīti* or Love. The real devotee does not see any difference between them. *Prīti* of the devotee gives God great pleasure.[4] A devotee can love God when his heart melts in devotion's crucible.[5] The permanent mood or *sthāyībhāva* in a devotee's

1. Tarafdar, *Hussain Shahi Bengal*, p. 213; S.B. Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, pp, 241-243; The 'juice' and the physical effects of its enjoyment were described by Vijayakṛṣṇa Gosvāmī: "If regularly drunk the juice keeps the body very fit...the juice accumulates in the brain-cells. Gradually it flows into the cavity of the mouth. Its taste differs according to the *bhakta's bhāva or* feelings". Kuladānanda Brahmacārī, *Srī Śrī Sadgurusanga*, II, pp. 80-81.
2. G. N. Mallik, "The Contribution of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism to Religious Thought", *Cultural Heritage of India*. II, pp. 122-123.
3. V.S. Apte, op, cit., p. 599.
4. *Prītisaṃdarbha*, pp. 572-594; *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 92-96.
5. Ibid., pp. 584-592.

soul is *Prīti* or Love of Kṛṣṇa.[1] *Bhaktirasa* is a development of *Prīti*.[2] The types of *Rasa* correspond to those of *Prīti*. *Madhura-rasa* and *Madhurarati* are blended together in eight continuous sequences, namely, *Rati* (Mental Delight), *Premabhakti* (Devotion in the form of nascent love), *Sneha* (Oily softness of love), *Praṇaya* (Deepening of Love), *Māna* (Enhancement of Love by chagrin, jealousy and anger), *Anurāga* (the stage when Kṛṣṇa, the object of love, appears eternally beautiful and fresh), and *Mahābhāva* (Madness caused by love's ecstasy).[3]

In the *Mahābhāva* stage the physical sensations grow dull. The devotee feels both the highest pleasure and the acutest pain. At this stage Caitanya himself looked pale, distraught, and even physically elongated. He wept, laughed, trembled, and rolled on the ground. Rādhā herself is said to have often experienced *Mahābhāva*.[4]

There is still another stage above *Mahābhāva*. It is the stage of *Divyonmāda* or 'divine madness', which is contemplated exclusively for Rādhā. The *Śāradīya Rāsa* or the autumnal *Rāsa* festival is regarded as the expression of the *Mahābhāva* and *Divyonmāda* stages.[5]

VIII

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas interpret *Mukti* or Liberation in a novel manner. According to them final release may mean *Sālokya* (Presence in God's abode), *Sārṣṭya* (Attainment of Divine Power), *Sārūpya* (Attainment of Divine Form), *Sāmīpya* (Proximity to God), and *Sāyujya* (Fusion with God). The main feature of *Sāyujya*-liberation is the immersion of the *Jīva*-soul in the timeless bliss of

1. *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, ch. 14; *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, 387-28; But this interpretation of the '*Sthāyībhāva*' was rejected by Jagannātha, the author of *Rasagangādhara*. Vide, Viṣṇupada Bhattāchārya, *Prācīna Bhāratīya Alaṃkara Śāstrer Bhūmikā*, Calcutta, 1953, pp. 77-78.
2. CCM ; p. 353 ; *Śuddha Bhakti Haite Haya Prītira Udgama.*
3. *Prītisaṃdarbha*, p. 946.
4. CCM ; pp. 389-90; *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, chs, 14 and 15.
5. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*. pp. 110-111.

Brahman. But according to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas such immersion of the *Jīva*-soul is neither possible nor desirable.[1]

A particular theory is applied to explain the impossibility of of the total fusion of the *Jīva*-soul in Kṛṣṇa-Brahman. This theory is known as the *Acintyabhedābheda* or Incomprehensible Dualistic Monism. It is said that this theory was first formulated by Rāmānanda Rāya and Svarūpa Dāmodara. It was explained by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja in the following manner:[2]

Rādhā Purṇaśakti Kṛṣṇa Pūrṇaśaktimān,
Dui Vastu Bheda Nāhi Śāstra Paramāṇa.||
Mṛgamada Tāra Gandha Yaiche Avichheda,
Agni Jvālāte Yaiche Kabhu Nahe Bheda.||
Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Aiche Sadā Ekaī Svarūpa.
Līlārasa Āsvādite Dhare Dui Rūpa.||

The following is the meaning of these verses: Kṛṣṇa is absolutely powerful. Rādhā is absolute power. They constitute duality in unity and unity in duality. Kṛṣṇa is Noun. Rādhā is Adjective. Thus there is both difference and unity betwecn Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. The musk (*Mṛgamada*) and its aroma are inseparable, and so are fire (*Agni*) and its power to burn (*Agnijvālā*). But mere aroma is not musk, nor power to burn, fire. The non-duality of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā becomes duality when Kṛṣṇa desires the enjoyment of bliss.[3]

The relation betwcen Kṛṣṇa and *Jīva* is incomprehensible because it is the relation of both difference (*bheda*) and non-difference

1. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 184; *Prītisaṃdarbha*, pp. 177-198.
2. CCM. p. 14; also, *Tattvasaṃdarbha*, p. 170, Statement 43 : *Tata Evābhedaśāstrānyubhayościdrūpatvena Jīvasamūhasya Durghatanāpatīyasyā Svābhāvikatadacintyaśaktyā Svabhāvata Eva Tadraśmiparamāṇugaṇasthānīyatvāttādvyatirekeṇāvyatirekeṇa Ca Virodhaṃ Parihṛtyāgre Muhurapi Tadetadvyāsasamādhilavdhasiddhāntayoyanāya Yoyanīyāni.* The theory is elaborated by Jīva Gosvāmin in *Sarvasamvādinī*. p. 194f, and Valadeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa in *Prameya*-4 of *Prameyaratnāvalī*.
3. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 311-12 ; Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda, op. cit. pp. 464-65. According to Haridāsa Dāsa *Acintyabhedābheda* was imported from the doctrines of the Mādhva sect. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, Ch. 3, pp. 112-13.

(*abheda*). As *Jīva*, which is of atomic size, is a part of *bhagavat* (divinity), the relation is one of non-difference. But while the attributes of *bhagavat* are superlative, those of the atomic *Jīva* is qualitatively inferior to them. There is, therefore, a difference or *bheda* between God and *Jīva*. While *Jīva* is controlled by *Māyā-śakti* (Power of Illusion), God remains far above Illusion or its power. *Māyāśakti* emanates from God, but does not affect Him. In this sense *Sāyujya* liberation is impossible. Being a part of God, *Jīva* can approach Him. But being different from God, it can never be equal to Him. Release at any stage does not signify a state of cease-work. The practice of devotion must always continue at any stage of release.

Bheda and *Abheda* are contradictory concepts. Their co-existence is explained only by a reference to the 'unthinkable' power of God. S.N. Dasgupta sums up the results of *Acintyabhedābheda-vāda* in the following manner :

1. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas used this formula with a view to defending the Vṛndāvana legend of Kṛṣṇa.
2. Kṛṣṇa's sports and 'bliss-attributes' are explained by this formula.
3. The supralogical power of God is used to defend the theory of His manifestation "in all kinds of limited forms", and also the theory of the identity of these forms with "His own supreme nature as pure bliss and consciousness."

S.N. Dasgupta thinks that "the introduction of the mystic formula of incomprehensibility seems to discharge the Vaiṣṇavas of this school from all responsibility of logically explaining their dogmas and creeds, and, thus uncontrolled, they descend from the domain of reason to the domain of Puranic faith of a mythological character."[1]

It must, however, be admitted that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas never described the material world as something unreal. The world,

1. S.N. Dasgupta, op. cit., pp. 16-18, 400-401; S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, II, pp. 762-763.

according to them, was very real because it existed at Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. If Kṛṣṇa so desired it might vanish at any time.[1] The belief in the reality of the phenomenal world signified a portentous rebellion against the theory of Illusion or *Māyā* propounded by Śankarācārya.

IX

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology was based upon the sectarian belief that other gods and goddesses were only manifestations of Kṛṣṇa-Brahman. As Kṛṣṇa's manifestations they were also eternal, infinite, omnipresent and omnicompetent. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas considerably toned down the ancient rivalry between Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism. Yet what must have been irksome to the Śaivas was that in support of their ideas the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas invariably quoted evidence only from the Vaiṣṇava myths and theological works. The Śaivas and the Tāntrikas disliked this evidence. Later, in one of their works called *Tantraratnākara*, they described Caitanya and his followers as veritable demons reborn in human form with the aim of destroying the Śaiva-Śākta religion. The *Nirvāṇatantra* averred that Kṛṣṇa could become the monarch of the universe only because Goddess Kālī bestowed on him a special power.[2]

X

Kṛṣṇa's play-mates are both male and female. They dwell in Vṛndāvana, which is Kṛṣṇa's abode. His play-mates are also considered both non-different and different from him.

Vṛndāvana is the geographical expression of a blissful cosmos, infinite, dynamic, all-pervading. Some Vaiṣṇavas regard their own material bodies as the mystic Vṛndāvana, wherein Kṛṣṇa resides. Rām Thākur, a Bengali mystic, once described Vṛndāvana in the

1. Bhaktivinoda Thākura, *Samagra Śrī Śrī Caitanyasikṣāmṛta*, pp. 56-57.
2. *Tantraratnākara* verses quoted by Rammohun Ray, *Granthāvalī*, II, p. 19. *Nirvāṇatantra*, ed. Rasikmohan Chattopadhyaya, p. 1,

following manner :[1]

> Vṛndāvana has an area of eighty-four *krośas*. It is centrally located in Vraja. There is no tranquillity in Vraja. It is eternally restless. The restlessness is caused by *Yogamāyā*. In Vraja love reigns supreme. If one comes to this place one never returns to earth. But the only access to Vraja lies through constant contemplation of the sports of Kṛṣṇa...This body is Vraja...It has a dimension of eighty-four finger-spans. Here, right at the centre, is located the *Nidhuvana* bower of Kṛṣṇa. Here everything is eternally restless. The predominant moods here are those of a servant, a friend. a parent, a lover. Here, in the *Vraja*-body Śrī Rādhā is the fountain of all moods. Here nobody is a master. Everything here is controlled by *Yogamāyā*. But still everything here is natural ..Nobody can come to this place with a soul corrupted by egoism and sex.

Rām Thākur's stress on *Yogamāyā* is likely to be contradicted by the orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. They regard *Māyā* or Illusion as an emanation from the *Śakti* of Kṛṣṇa. *Yogamāyā* is the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's *citśakti* or absolute consciousness, by which Kṛṣṇa himself is not affected.[2] But Rām Thākur's experience was mystic, and therefore unexplainable.

XI

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas distinguish between the Vṛndāvana sports which are manifest (*Prakata*) and the Vṛndāvana sports which are not (*Aprakrata*).[3] In the un-manifest sports the milkmaids are Kṛṣṇa's wives. But in manifest sports, which constitute the central theme of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, they are *apparently* wives of other persons. Rūpa Gosvāmin justifies Kṛṣṇa's manifest sports in the following manner :[4]

> According to *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* even though Kṛṣṇa is *Ātmārāma* (self-complacent), He divides Himself into as many Kṛṣṇas as there are milk-maids, and plays with them. In this way He shows His appreciation of the devotional love the milkmaids feel for Him. But what God does a

1. Gopīnāth Kavirāj, *Sādhudarśan O Satprasanga*, Vol. I, pp. 140-141.
2. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*; pp. 199-502.
3. Ibid. pp. 86-87.
4. *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, Ch. 3, *Prakaraṇa* 27-32, and the third verse of *Nāyikābhedaprakaraṇa*.

mere mortal cannot do. The *Bhāgavata* has strictly forbidden the emulation of the sports of Kṛṣṇa by a mortal. God, as Rudra, drank off the poison churned out of the primordial ocean. Would not an ordinary man give up his ghost if he drinks that poison ?

But then why should God, the Fountain of Knowledge, the Friend of all living beings, do anything which is ordinarily done by inconsiderate and indisciplined persons ? The answer to this question is that God sports with the milkmaids only to satīsfy the genuine desire of the real devotees to witness or hear of such beatific sports, which are not to be described in the presence of people who do not understand or support the concept of God as love.

Kṛṣṇa really does not sport with other mens' wives. The milkmaids are, no doubt, married ; but they have no physical relation with their husbands. Śukadeva, the saint, reveals the fact that the so-called husbands of Vṛndāvana are so hoodwinked by *Yogamāyā* that they never know that their so-called wives are merely shadows without substance.

The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, however, regarded the milkmaids as women who were blemished by *Vyābhicāra* or infidelity. Yet they found redemption in *bhakti*.[1] According to a Vaiṣṇava scholar the other Vaiṣṇava orders of Vṛndāvana once decided to boycott the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas for lending verisimilitude of spirituality to the mythical tale of the extra-marital loves of Kṛṣṇa, which was fraught with dangerous social implications. Faced with the unenviable prospect of boycott, Rūpa and Jīva thought out a modification of the concept of Kṛṣṇa's manifest sports.[2] They later preached the theory that the milkmaids of Vṛndāvana were legally married to Kṛṣṇa. Rūpa quoted a text called *Mūlamādhava* to evidence this contention.[3] *Mūlamādhava* is yet to be discovered. Jīva Gosvāmin described Rādhā's marriage with Kṛṣṇa in *Gopālacampū*.[4] Rūpa, too, described Rādhā's marrige with Kṛṣṇa in the tenth act of *Lalitamādhava*. This marriage is said to have taken place in Dvārakā where a 'new' Vṛndāvana was built. According to Rādhāgovinda Nāth, the

1. BR ; 1/69.
2. View quoted in *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 396, but Rādhāgovinda Nāth does not support it.
3. *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, Ch. I, Prakaraṇa-16.
4. *Gopālacampū, Uttarārdha*, Chs. 32-36. It was composed in Saṃvat 1645-1649 : Sukumar Sen, *History of Brajabuli Literature*, p. 385.

marriage of Kṛṣṇa with Rādhā and other milkmaids was stressed even by Caitanya.[1] The subject of Kṛṣṇa's marriage with Rādhā and other *Gopinīs* or milkmaids became a highly debatable one. The importance of the debate on this interesting issue has been belittled by modern interpreters like Haridāsa Dāsa and Rādhāgovinda Nāth.[2] But two Bengali Vaiṣṇavas of the eighteenth century, Rūpa Kavirāja and Viśvanātha Cakravartī, quite emphatically rejected the idea of Kṛṣṇa's marriage with the milkmaids. Rūpa Kavirāja wrote *Sārasaṃgraha* in which he explained the spiritual significance of *Samartharati* or extra-conjugal love.[3] Rūpa Kavirāja is said to have been an uncle of Viśvanātha Cakravartī.[4] According to Rādhāgovinda Nāth Rūpa Kavirāja tried to "do away with external religious practices and attach entire importance to the internal practices, viz., meditation on the *līlās*...In a controversy, however, Viśvanātha defeated Rūpa Kavirāja and excommunicated him with his followers."[5] It seems that Viśvanātha Cakravartī fully supported the *Parakiyā* theory, but, at the same time, laid emphasis on external rituals.[6] There is documentary evidence of a debate on the *Svakiyā-Parakiyā* issue held in the court of Jaisingh II of Amber in Śaka 1640 (A.D.1718). In this controversy Valadeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa established the soundness of the *Parakiyā* doctrine.[7] The same debate was also held in Bengal in A.D. 1720/1721 in Murshidābād, in which the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas established the supremacy of *Parakiyā* love.[8]

1. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 334. Jīva Gosvāmin's prevarication with regard to the 'conjugal' (*Svakiyā*) and 'extraconjugal' (*Parakiyā*) concepts is discussed by Naresh Chandra Jānā in *Vṛndāvaner Chaya Gosvāmī*, pp. 187-195.
2. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 378-398; *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, Ch. IV, pp. 155-157.
3. *Sārasaṃgraha*, pp. 8, 14-34, 52-54, 55-57, 100 f.
4. Ibid., Introduction, p. XLIII.
5. *The Cultural Heritage of India*, II, p. 161.
6. *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, Nirṇayasāgara ed. "Ānandacandrikā Tīkā", on verse 12 of 'Nāyakabheda', pp. 12-29; also the *Tīka* on verses 16 and 17 of 'Nāyakabheda'.
7. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 396.
8. D.C. Sen, *Typical Selections From Old Bengali Literature*, II, pp. 1638-43; Sukumar Sen, *Madhyayuger Bānglā O Bāngāli* p. 81; *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 296.

Rādhāgovinda Nāth proffers certain scholastic arguments with a view to closing the chapter on the controversy. The basic proposition of Nāth is that both *Svakiyā* and *Parakiyā* ideas are theologically unimpeachable. He believes that there is hardly any fundamental divergence between the two reconstructions of the loves of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa and his 'milkmaid'-wives merely simulated adultery only to enjoy the bliss of love to the fullest extent, only to add sufficient nourishment (*puṣṭi*) to *Rasa*. Rādhāgovinda Nāth tries to justify the *Svakiyā* doctrine with the argument that Kṛṣṇa was only a small boy, and that he finally left Vṛndāvana for Mathurā when he was only eleven years of age. Even if at this tender age Kṛṣṇa really indulged in sports with the adolescent milkmaids, he could do so only by some "miraculous development of love".[1] Once again the theory of 'incomprehensibility' is invoked to explain a myth which, according to Sātkari Mukherji, "cannot stand the scrutiny of logical analysis".[2]

XII

The mystic Vṛndāvana in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature is very much like a mediaeval kingdom where the prince is surrounded by a hierarchical retinue. The Vṛndāvana personnel are vividly described by Rūpa Gosvāmin in *Śrīkṛṣṇagaṇoddeśadīpikā*. "The influence of the royal court and feudal society with which the principal gosvamins...were closely associated before they met Caitanya, was responsible for transforming the pastoral headman Nanda into a regular feudal prince".[3] A particular duty is assigned to each of Kṛṣṇa's servants and friends. A Brāhmaṇa youth named Madhumangala served him as the court-jester. The pattern of the assignment of duties to Kṛṣṇa's friends and servants, who are his bliss-attributes, was probably a modified version of the service organised in such big

1. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 378-398; *The Cultural Heritage of India*, II, p. 139.
2. *Sārasaṃgraha*, Foreword, P, VIII.
3. B.B. Majumdar, *Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend*, p. 219.

temples as the temple of Jagannātha in Purī.[1]

The Vṛndāvana of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas is a wonderful place, the heaven on earth. The woods and the meadows there are eternally green and very different from the sun-bleached plains of north-western India. Kṛṣṇa's *Māyāśakti* performs a marvellous feat of engineering. She makes each of the six seasons eternally manifest in each particular section of the woods, so that Kṛṣṇa may enjoy the bliss of seasonal sports at any time of a particular day. Vṛndā is the presiding deity of the woods. Like a very efficient secretary she make the arrangements for the sports of the God.[2]

XIII

Rādhā has an exalted place is the Vṛndāvana hierarchy. In the thirteenth century A.D. Nimvārka emphasized the importance of Rādhā, who is not mentioned in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, as the eternal consort of Kṛṣṇa, and relegated Rukmiṇī to the background. According to Śashībhusaṇ Dāsgupta, Caitanya might have imbibed the idea of Rādhā's preeminence from his wanderings in the Deccan and talks with Rāmānanda Rāya.[3] The philosophical basis of Rādhā worship was laid by Rūpa and Jīva.[4] Rādhā was regarded as the *Hlādinīśakti* (the power which makes Kṛṣṇa capable of relishing His own sports) of Kṛṣṇa. The *Hlādinīśakti* is an emanation from God's *Svarūpaśakti* or Sentient Power. In God *Svarūpaśakti* resides in the semblance of *Rasa* and makes him the transcendental *Rasika*. In the devotee this power is *bhakti*. Rādhā is the personification of *bhaktirasa*. She is not only the embodiment of eternal love but also that of the abstract idea of the eternal lover. Rādhā is the

1. The administrative organisation in the Purī Temple of Jagannātha is discussed in great detail by Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda in *Śrīkṣetra*, pp. 122-131.
2. Kṛṣṇa's daily sports in the woods of Vṛndāvana are described by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja in *Govindalīlāmṛtaṃ* (Madhyalīlā) and Viśvanātha Chkravartī in *Śrīkṛṣṇabhāvanāmṛtaṃ*, beginning from Canto 10 onwards.
3. Śashībhusaṇ Dāsgupta, *Śri Rādhār Kramavikāsh*, p. 197.
4. *Bṛhadbhāgavatāmṛtaṃ*, I, ch. 7; *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, Nirnayasāgara ed. *Rādhāprakaraṇa* pp. 75-96; *Śrikṛṣṇasaṃdarbha*, Section 16,

embodiment of Love Divine, and, therefore, far superior to the other milkmaids and even the queens of Kṛṣṇa. She is the greatest devotee of Kṛṣṇa who, on his part, regards himself as her disciple.[1]

XIV

There are several views with regard to the relevance of Caitanya in the theological order enunciated by the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. The early view was that he was Rādhā's emblem. The following song expresses the idea :

Gaurānga Nahita, Ki Mene Haīta, Kemane Dharita De
Rādhāra Mahimā, Prema Rasa Sīmā, Jagate Jānāta Ke[2]

Were Gaurānga (Caitanya) not born what would have happened? How would I have lived? Who else would have made the limits of the bliss of love and the glory of Rādhā, who symbolizes the farthest limits of love as *Rasa*, known to the world?

Later Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja postulated the idea that Caitanya was the incarnation of both Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, conjoined together by one soul. Kṛṣṇa wanted to relish his sports with Rādhā by becoming Rādhā herself. And so Caitanya, the human combination of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, materialised.[3]

The third view was that Caitanya was the incarnation of only Kṛṣṇa.[4] Very probably this view was not supported by the Vṛndāvana theologians who did not write any theological dissertation on the Caitanya incarnation of Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's concept of Caitanya as a sort of spiritual

1. CCM : p. 15 : "*Rādhikāra Premaguru Āmi Śiṣya Nata*", also *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 112-115.
2. *Bāsu Ghoṣer Padāvalī*, pp. 160-161; according to Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, this important verse was written by Narahari Sarkār of Śrikhaṇḍa. *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, pp. 140-141.
3. CCM : P. 13 : *Rādhākṛṣṇa Eka Ātmā Dui Deha Dhari| Anyonye Vilase Rasa Āsvādana Kari|| Sei Dui Eka Eve Caitanyagosāin| Rasa Āsvādite Donhe Haila Eka Thāī||*
4. This view is stated again and again in CBH and Murāri Gupta's *Śricaitanyacaritāmṛtam*.

Siamese twin was not acceptable to many philosophers. A modern critic of the concept makes the following remark :

> "In profane jocular parlance Gaur (Caitnaya) is...a transcendental hermaphrodite, a protozoon that at times disp'ays segmentation of cell in the exquisite forms of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa".[1]

The believers in the dual incarnation of Caitanya made much ado about Caitanya's 'golden colour'. Caitanya was, no doubt, Kṛṣṇa. But his golden colour was an unmistakable proof of his physical identity with Rādhā, who, too, had golden colour. But there must yet be a difference between Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya. Caitanya was only an incarnation. But Kṛṣṇa, Supreme God, Brahman, was the source of all incarnations.[2]

The concept of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugality in Caitanya was possibly an invention of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja himself. It is not explained by the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. Rādhāgovinda Nāth analyses and supports the mythical evidence adduced by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja to prove his theory.[3] Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmin, too, believed in Caitanya's divinity.[4] Sanātana believed that Caitanya's fundamental aim was to preach *Prema* and *Bhakti*.[5] Some Caitanya-devotees like Pravodhānanda Sarasvatī of Benaras, however, placed Caitanya above Kṛṣṇa. Pravodhānanda, who was an insignificant philosopher in comparison with Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma,[6] invented the theory of *Gaurapāramyavāda* or the Primacy of Gaurānga.[7] Nara-

1. Nanilal Sen, "The Import of the Rasarājā-Mahābhāva Equation", *Ācārya Rādhāgovinda Smārakagrantha*, p. 14. Sen concludes that "Rasarāja and Mahābhāva are Gaur and Viṣṇupriyā respectively" : p. 20.
2. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 276-297 ; S.K. De, "Caitanya Worship as a Cult", *Bengal's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature*, etc. pp. 128-142.
3. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 276-295. The discussion is absolutely uncritical.
4. S.K. De, "Caitanya Worship as a Cult" op. cit. pp. 128-134.
5. Ibid., pp. 134-142.
6. Dīnesh Chandra Bhattāchārya, *Bāngālīr Sārasvat Avadān*, I, p. 40, fn.
7. Pravodhānanda Sarasvatī, *Śricaitanyacandrāmṛtam*, verses 57-79. S.K. De, *ut supra.*, pp. 137-138; Bimānbiharī Majumdār, *Śrīcaitanyacariter Upādān*, pp. 171-179.

hari Sarkār of Śrīkhaṇḍa popularised the idea that Gaurānga, the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, was the paramour of the women of Navadvīpa. This idea is known as *Gauranāgaravāda*. The popularity of Caitanya worship in Bengal is evidenced by a large number of *Gauracandrikā* songs in *Padāvalī* literature. An unknown poet even composed a *Virudastotra* on Caitanya, in which the young religious leader was described as Supreme God and the guardian of both Brahman and Śiva.[1]

XV

The concept of Kṛṣṇa as God-Hero, and the divine lover of Rādhā and innumerable milkmaids, was the basis of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava aesthetics or *Rasaśāstra*, the earliest and the most authoritative exponent of which was Rūpa Gosvāmin. Over the *Rasa* in conventional aesthetics Rūpa Gosvāmin established the preponderance of *Bhakti*, and the primacy of *Śṛngārarasa* or *Ujjvalarasa* after it was sublimated by the devotional sentiment. *Bhaktirasa* was a new *Rasa*. Rūpa Gosvāmin "gave a new turn to the old Rasa theory of conventional poetics." The invention of *Bhaktirasa* was the logical outcome of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* dictum to the effect that "speech and poetic art remain profane if these do not describe Kṛṣṇa's glories".[2]

Rūpa Gosvāmin expounded the sentiment of love as the sublimation of conventional erotics achieved through the medium of devotion. His *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi* was modelled upon Siṃhabhūpāla's *Rasārṇavasudhākara*. Here the basic features of *Ujjvalanīlamaṇī* may be briefly stated. Firstly, the work deals with *Madhurarasa*.

1. Haridāsa Dāsa, *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, pp. 152-154.
2. *Bhaktirāsamṛtasindhu* 2: 1: 3: ; "*Vibhāvairanubhavaiśca Sāttvikair Vyābhicāribhih*", etc. Also, *Svādyatvaṃ Hṛdibhaktānāmānītā Śravaṇādibhih. Eṣa Kṛṣṇaratih Sthāyībhāvo Bhaktiraso Bhavet*". S.K. De, *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, pp. 166, 203-94; Ramārānjan Mukhopādhyāya, *Rasasamīkṣā*, pp. 151-175; Viṣṇupada Bhattācārya, *Prācīn Bhārater Alaṃkār Śāstrer Bhūmikā* Ch. 8, pp. 77-84. *Bhaktirasa* is not recognised as a *Rasa* by Jagannātha: *Rasagangādhara*, Nirṇayasāgara ed. pp. 55-56. See, BR. p. 94, verses 5-6.

But the model of the exposition of this *Rasa* is the secular *Śṛngārarasa*. The basic postulates have been elaborated from Kṛṣṇa's point of view. Secondly, in this work the hero of all moods, emotions and situations is Kṛṣṇa. The greatest heroine is, of course, Rādhā. Thirdly, the detailed categorisation of sentiments, heroes, heroines, their attendants and messengers, moods and situations is undoubtedly the most interesting feature of this work. This feature lends to it an authoritative character. Rūpa Gosvāmin's choice of explanatory verses is invariably apt. But he carefully avoids the path leading to secular erotics.[1] *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi* was closely followed by the Bengali *padāvalī* composers. Strict conformity to its rules, definitions and categories ultimately destroyed the poetic freedom of the composers, and the *padāvalī* grew artificial and lifeless.

XVI

How were the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana and the other Vaiṣṇavas affected by the theology sketched above?

The gosvāmins were unquestionably celibate and ascetical. With meticulous care they practised strict self-denial as religious discipline. They lived in poverty like their leader Caitanya. They were also unambitious. Heir to a great fortune, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin renounced the world and practised austerity in a manner which won the admiration of the Vaiṣṇavas, including Caitanya. It is said that Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin daily ate the rotten rice which even the *Trailangī* cows refused to consume because of its offensive stench.[2] The brothers Sanātana and Rūpa wore rags and ate rough, hand-made bread, and sang *Kīrtana*.[3] A man with the

1. It has been yet claimed by a scholar that a deep knowledge of Vātsāyana's *Kāmasūtra* is really necessary for the proper understanding of the 'manifest' sports of Kṛṣṇa as delineated in *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*. Satyendranāth Basu, *Vātsāyaner Kāmasūtra* Calcutta, n.d. preface.
2. CCM : p. 503 : "*Vairāgyera Kathā Tāra Adbhūta Kathana.| Ājanma Nā Dila Jihvāya Rasera Sparśaṇa.||* also, CCM : p. 504.
3. CCM : p. 351 : "*Vipragṛhe Sthūla Bhikṣā Kāhā Mādhukarī,| Śuṣka Ruti Cāvānā Civāya Bhoga Parihari.|| Karoyā Mātra Hāte Kānthā Chinḍa Vahirvāsa.| Kṛṣṇakathā Kṛṣṇanāma Nartana Ullāsa.|*

intellectual brilliance of Jīva Gosvāmin could, if he so wished, build up a great career. But these talented men regarded ambition as "a slut who is also a *Caṇḍāla* untouchable".[1]

Caitanya himself was very much aware of the danger inherent in the mystic contemplation of divine love. He himself practised severe austerity. Any man in his group found wanting in self-discipline faced the risk of expulsion from the order.[2] Vaiṣṇava puritanism sprang from the conviction that a genuine *Bhakta's* first and only concern was the cultivation of *Bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa, for which he had to suppress all other instincts and impulses. The practice of austerity was calculated to strengthen the Vaiṣṇava's remarkable fixity of purpose. A faithful Vaiṣṇava ascetic or *Vairāgin* could possess only a homespun rug (*Kānthā*) and a wooden bowl (*kaḍaṇka*). The life of poverty and the practice of humility made it possible for the Vaiṣṇavas to mix freely with the poor millions and transform the Caitanya movement into a mass movement. Vaiṣṇava *sadācāra* or 'decent conduct' was outwardly followed even by the Tāntrikas.[3] *Sadācāra* was even ritualised.[4]

But the celebrated gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana spent their lives in seeking justification for the erotic theory of the *līlā* or sports of Kṛṣṇa and his sweethearts. They preached the theory that Kṛṣṇa's sports were untouched by sexuality. But unfortunately they did not clearly explain the purpose behind these sports. The theory of the sports is, no doubt, elaborated. But the purpose or the consequences of these sports, insofar as they affected human lives or human society, the gosvāmins do not explain. *Bhakti* is under-

1. Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin, *Stavāvalih*, "Manahśikṣā", p. 31, verse 7.
2. Haridāsa Junior was expelled from the order by Caitanya himself when he inadvertently brought some fine rice from an old woman for Caitanya's consumption. He went to Allahabad, where he committed suicide. CCM : pp. 441-445.
3. *Śāktakramaṃ*, ed, Rasikmohan Chattopādhyāya, p. 7 : "*Athātah Saṃpravakṣyāmi Sāmayācāramuttamaṃ...Udāracittah Sarvatra Vaiṣṇavācāratatparah. Paranindāsahiṣṇuh Syādupakāraratāh sadā*"...etc.
4. *Haribhaktivilāsa*. Baharampur ed. Chs. IX and X. 25. The moral qualities of a Vaiṣṇava are mentioned in *Karṇānanda*, pp. 61-63.

standable. But it is not known why should Kṛṣṇa always, invariably and eternally sport with the milkmaids. The question 'why' was not raised by them; they merely tried to postulate the fundamental laws of Kṛṣṇa's sports. These laws are said to be axiomatic like the law of gravitation.

Their theory of the asexual character of Kṛṣṇa's sports looked strange when some of them began to write verses which were heavily laden with unconcealed libido. *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, for instance, is a huge anthology of erotic verses. Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Dānakelikaumudī*, a *bhaṇikā*, has scenes which are, to say the least, highly improper.[1] Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin wrote *Muktācaritra* in which some naughty speeches of Kṛṣṇa are recorded.[2] The *Smaraṇamangala* technique of worshipping Kṛṣṇa was first stated in the *Padmapurāṇa*.[3] Rūpa Gosvāmin enunciated the same technique in eleven verses.[4] According to these interesting verses well-defined periods were assigned to any day from dawn to dawn. During each of these periods Kṛṣṇa was supposed to have sported with Rādhā, her principal companions, and their maid-servants. In some of the *Smaraṇamangala* scenes depicted by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā and the other young ladies even indulge in drunken orgies.[5] More than thirty Sanskrit *Kāvyas* and innumerable Sanskrit, Bengali and Brajabuli verses were composed on these unending sports.[6]

1. *Dānakelikaumudī*, p. 20, verse 34; p. 26, verse 47; p. 37, verse 65; p. 83, verse 141. etc.
2. In this work Kṛṣṇa very often expresses his desire to enjoy the magnificent charms of Rādhā and her female companions in a very bold language. These expressions are deemed "delightful" by B.B. Majumdar, *Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend*, p. 125. The offensive speeches are recorded in *Muktācaritra*, ed. Nityasvarūpa Brahmacārī, pp. 31-32, 37, 41-43, 48, 62, 64-65, 74-76, 81-82, 86-87 etc.
3. *Padmapurāṇa*, *Pātālakhaṇḍa*, Bangabāsī ed. Ch. 52 : Bhaktivinoda Thākura, *Samagra Śrī Śrī Caitanyaśikṣāmṛta*, pp. 322-323; B.B. Majumdar, *Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend*, p. 215.
4. Quoted in S.K. De's *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, pp. 673-74.
5. *Govindalīlāmṛtaṃ*, Canto 14; *Śrīkṛṣṇabhāvanāmṛtaṃ*, Canto 13.
6. Vide, *Bhāvanāsārasaṃgraha*, ed. Haridāsa Dāsa.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas thought that the best way of worshipping Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa was to worship them as *Manjarīs* or adolescent maid-servants.[1] This type of worship gradually degenerated into transvestism.[2] Big men, old or oldish men, respectable men, wore the *Sārī* and behaved like young women in love with a mediaeval hero.[3]

The "Sexo-Yogic" Sahajiyā cult received almost a new lease of life from the theories of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophers.[4] But they did not keep "divine erotics" confined to contemplation (*Manana*) remembrance (*Smaraṇa*) and analysis (*Nididhyāsana*). They practised illicit sexual intercourse as a religious rite.[5]

XVII

The philosophy, theology, *Kāvya*, *Nātaka*, and *Campū* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order sing in unison the glory of the loves of Kṛṣṇa. It may very well be argued that in these creations the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theologians expound the fundamental tenets of a mediaeval sex-cult garbed in the mystic principle of *bhakti*. "The spiritual foundation" writes Sushil Kumar De, "is too flimsy for its overwhelming excess of palpable eroticism".[6] The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology denies sexuality to its adherents and tantalises them with the tales and images of a sexy God. "The aggressive side of the tradition was neglected", says a modern paychologist.[7] Max

1. *Manjarī* worship, too, is traced to *Padmapurāṇa*. B. B. Majumdar, op. cit. p. 180 S. B. Dasgupta thinks that Jayadeva was a *manjarī* worshipper : *Obscure Religious Cults*, pp. 125-126.
2. Biographical sketches of Nandinī and Jangalī in *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana* I, pp. 78-79. Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin describes the functions of a *manjarī in Vilāpakusumānjali* included in his *Stavāvalih*. The poet Rāyaśekhara regarded himself as a *manjarī* of Rādhā. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Vaiṣṇava Padāvaiī*, pp. 300-368.
3. See biographical sketches of Caitanya Dāsa and Lalitā Sakhī in *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, II, pp. 84-96; 374-386.
4. Dimock, *The Place of the Hidden Moon*, pp. 146-152.
5. Ibid., p. 241 : "Nāyikāsādhanā Tīkā".
6. S.K. De, *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, p. 550.
7. Spratt, *Hindu Culture and Personality*, p. 320.

Weber thinks that the religion of Caitanya was dominated by "crass sexual orgiasticism".[1] R.G. Bhandarkar explains the erotic theology of *Manjarī* worship as "debasement of Vaiṣṇavism".[2]

There may be at least a modicum of truth in these highly critical evaluations of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ethics. But some of these charges have no solid foundation. Māny religious sects have laid stress on love as a means of spiritual realisation of God. Such a concept need not be considered a sign of moral degradation. Annie Besant is reported to have said the following in defence of *bhakti*: "When He, Who is Beauty and Love and Bliss, shews a little portion of Himself on earth enclosed in human form, the weary eyes of men lift up, the tired hearts of men expand with a new hope and new vigour. They are irresistably attracted to Him. Devotion spontaneously springs up".[3] D.D. Kosambi wrote: "With Caitanya and his followers, a way was found through *bhakti* music, ecstasy and dance to make the rich surrender a part at least of their prerogatives, for we are told that whole villages would dance to the next settlement in joy. People dance on the scale only when some new form of life has developed that bears a vision of hope; one may see this for himself in New China".[4] "Caitanyadeva", wrote Bhūpendranāth Datta, "brought about a new age in Bengal".[5]

Recently Kānāilāl Datta and Kṣetra M. Purkayāstha have proffered some arguments against the charge of eroticism levelled against the Caitanya movement.[6] Their main arguments are as follows:

1. Eroticism is relevant to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theory of *Rāgānugā bhakti*.
2. Kṛṣṇa and his bliss-attributes are "above judgement by an earthly social code."
3. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are not known to have ever indulged in corrupt practices in the name of religion.

1. Weber, *The Religion of India*, pp. 316-317.
2. Bhandarkar. *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, pp. 122-124.
3. Quoted by Hīrendranāth Datta in *Premadharma*, p. 134.
4. *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*, pp. LiV f.
5. Bhūpendranāth Datta, *Vaiṣṇava Sāhitye Sāmājatattva*, intro. p. 6.
6. Kānāilāl Datta, & Kṣetramohan Purkayāstha, *The Bengal Vaiṣṇavism and Modern Life*, pp. 84-98.

4. The message of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism "is not designed to have a social reference."

Sātkari Mukherji argues that "it will be a travesty of justice if we liken (the Vṛndāvana milkmaid) to the fallen woman", because the Vṛndāvana milkmaid "has no thought for her own pleasure". He thinks that the doctrine of extra-marital love was "entirely restricted to God". He also thinks that "marriage must give way before the supreme claim of spiritual relationship", and that "social organisation is only a means for the development of the spiritual life". "When the call of spiritual upsurge comes, it overrides all established orders of state and society".[1] Sātkari Mukherji's idea of marriage and spirituality sounds very much like the dictum of *Niruttara Tantra*, according to which a married woman had the right to forsake her husband while she practised Tāntrika *Kulācāra*.[2]

It is, however, wrong to suggest that Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy was not in any way related to society. "Kṛṣṇa's activities as a human being", writes N.N. Law, "must be judged by the moral standard applicable to all men, and any argument to the contrary is out of count".[3] Caitanya's religious movement had a clearly identifiable social background. The movement certainly produced some effects which had a definite social significance. S. Levy was wrong when he wrote that Caitanya neglected humanity.[4] The merits and demerits of the Caitanya movement should be judged not in the light of philosophy (because no philosophy or theology may be absolutely perfect) but from the point of view of social history. Vaiṣṇavism of the Gaudīya order emerged from an identifiable historical background, and gradually communicated an impetus to the society in Bengal. The nature of this impetus and its results should be studied.

1. Sātkari Mukherji's Foreword in *Sārasaṃgraha*, pp. VIII-XIV.
2. *Niruttara Tantra*: "*Vivāhita Patityāge Duṣaṇaṃ Na Kulārcane*", quoted in *Bṛhat Tantrasāra*, ed. Rasikmohan Chattopādhyāya, 2nd ed. 1927, pp. 1011-1012.
3. N.N. Law, *Śrīkṛṣṇa and Śrīcaitanya*, p. 85.
4. S. Levy's Foreword in D.C. Sen's *Caitanya and His Age*, p. XXIII.

CHAPTER VI

ADVAITA ĀCĀRYA

I

Dinesh Chandra Sen wrote :[1]

> "From 1533 to 1590 the Vaiṣṇava community of Bengal lay enervated by an overpowering feeling of forlornness. The Sankirtana parties lost all heart, and their great music,...sounded no more on the banks of the Ganges...and the history of this period shows no striking feature of the Vaiṣṇava movement and no activity of any noteworthy nature".

Sen made these remarks in order to describe in a general manner the benumbing effect of Caitanya's death. But the period stretching from 1533 when Caitanya died, to the end of the sixteenth century witnessed the consolidation of the Caitanya movement in Bengal and Vṛndāvana. During this period contact was established between Vṛndāvana and the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal. The works of the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana were brought to Bengal and accepted as authoritative texts. The period also witnessed the development of the brilliant Vaiṣṇava art-forms in Bengal. During this period many Vaiṣṇava organisations and centres evolved in Bengal.

II

The story of these developments is intimately linked with the career of Advaita and Nityānanda who were regarded as the undisputed leaders of the Caitanya movement. But unfortunately no authoritative biographies of these leaders were written. Many legends were concocted about them by sectarian biographers. Caitanya's indebtedness to these great leaders was never properly studied or assessed. It is said that Advaita Ācārya was fifty-two

1. D.C. Sen, *Vaishnava Literature of Mediaeval Bengal*, p. 68.

years of age when Caitanya was born.[1] Advaita's early career is shrouded in mystery. He came to Navadvīpa from Lāuḍ in Sylhet when he was a boy of twelve. Excepting his association with the Vaiṣṇavas of Sylhet and Mādhavendra Purī, and Mādhavendra Purī's disciple Īśvara Purī, no reliable information with regard to his life in Navadvīpa, prior to Caitanya's advent, is available. He married Śrī Devī and Sītā Devī, two daughters of one Nṛsiṃha Bhādurī. He had six sons. They were Acyutānanda, Kṛṣṇadāsa, Gapāladāsa, Balarāma, and the twins, Svarūpa and Jagadīśa.[2] There are legends galore in such unreliable biographies as Lāuḍīyā Kṛṣṇadāsa's *Vālya-līlāsūtraṃ*, Īśāṇa Nāgara's *Advaitaprakāśa*, Haricaraṇa Dāsa's *Advaitamangala*, Viṣṇudāsa Ācārya's *Sītāgūṇakadaṃva*, and Lokanātha Dāsa's *Sītācaritra*.[3] It is said that Advaita studied the Vedas and the six systems of Indian philosophy. In about 1452-1453 Advaita is said to have visited numerous holy places, including Mithilā, after the death of his parents. He became a disciple of Mādhavendra Purī and met poet Vidyāpati.[4] He returned to Śāntipur and then married the above-mentioned ladies. He taught *Yavaṇa* (Muhammadan) Haridāsa Hindu philosophy and the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. According to Īśāṇa Nāgara, even Caitanya's parents were his disciples.[5] He is said to have written *bhakti*-commentaries on the *Gītā* and *Yogavāśiṣta Rāmāyaṇa*.[6] He blessed Nityānanda just after his birth.[7] He is said to have continuously 'roared' for a week

1. *Advaitaprakāśa*, Ch. 10, p. 43, According to this work Advaita was born in A.D. 1434 and died in 1559. Ch. 22, p. 103. But its authenticity has been questioned. Bimānbihārī Majumdār, *Śrīcaitanyacariter Upādān*, pp. 424-435. A recent estimate places Advaita between A.D. 1454 and 1550. Sukhamaya Mukhopādhyāya, *Madhyayuger Bāṅglā Sāhityer Tathya O Kālakram*, p. 44.
2. *Advaitaprakāśa*, Ch. 11, pp. 45-47 ; *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 24, pp. 237-38.
3. The unreliability of these legends has been discussed by Bimānbihārī Majumdār, op. cit. pp, 405-489.
4. Bimānbihārī Majumdār thinks that Advaita might have visited Mithilā after Vidyāpati's death. op. cit. p. 429.
5. *Advaitaprakāśa*. Ch. 10. p. 41.
6. Ibid., Ch. 14, p. 59.
7. Bimānbihārī Majumdār, op. cit. p. 443. Mādhavendra Purī, too, blessed Nityānanda in his infancy. Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa, *Gaurāṅgavijaya*, pp. 7-8.

so that Caitanya might be born.[1] It is rather unfortunate that such legends should have been circulated about one of the great leaders of the *bhakti* movement in Eastern India.

Both in the *Caitanyabhāgavata* and *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* Advaita Ācārya is described as a senior, scholarly, and highly respectable leader of the Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa. As a Vārendra Brāhmaṇa he had to abide by the Brāhmaṇical conventions. But Vṛndāvana Dāsa describes him as an angry old man. The extreme aridness of Navadvīpa's intellectual atmosphere was intolerable to him. He revolted against the Brāhmaṇical stereotype. Once, in ungovernable anger, he behaved like a tribal shaman. He shed off his clothes and shouted imprecations against the philistines.[2] Later the Vaiṣṇavas began to believe that his angry imprecations had hastened the advent of Caitanya, the new Vaiṣṇava messiah. Very often Vṛndāvana Dāsa describes Advaita as the prophet of the Caitanya movement, as the old, wise man, whose justifiable anger had caused the downfall of the citadel of Brāhmaṇical reaction.

It must be noted that the necessity of the *Avatāra* of Nārāyaṇa, specifically suited to the spiritual needs of the *Kali*-age, was first propounded by Advaita Ācārya before Caitanya's advent. The impending Caitanya *Avatāra* he vigorously invoked against Brāhmaṇical reaction. He had the idea of a four-armed Viṣṇu, reincarnated with the mission of flushing out the infidels and the philistines.[3] There is, however, a view that Advaita initially supported the philosophical, concepts of Śankarācārya.[4] Supposing that this view is correct, one may yet say that his original ideas must have been thoroughly changed by his close contact with Mādhavendra Purī, who was his *guru*. Even before Caitanya had renounced the world Advaita, Śrīvāsa, Murāri Gupta and other Vaiṣṇavas

1. Bimānbiḥārī Majumdār, op. cit. 446.
2. CBH : p. 13 : *Śuniyā Advaita Krodhe Agnihena Jvale.| Digamvara Hai Sarva Vaiṣṇavere Bole.||* etc.
3. CBH : p. 13 : "...*Prakāśiyā Cāri Bhuja Cakra Laimu Hate.|| Paṣaṇḍire Kātiyā Karimu Skandha Nāśa.| Tave Kṛṣṇa Prabhu Mora Muin Tāra Dāsa.||*
4. *Śriman Madhusūdana Sarasvatī Viracita Advaita Siddhi*, ed. Rājendranāth Ghosh, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 142-143.

worshipped him as Nārāyaṇa.[1] The great importance of Advaita in the Caitanya movement consisted in the fact that it was he who boldly proclaimed in Purī that Caitanya, as supreme God, was the quintessence of the *avatāras*.[2] Such a proclamation in a great pilgrim-centre like Purī had certainly a great bearing on the propagation of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava faith. In Purī Advaita also sang a hymn on Caitanya-Nārāyaṇa.[3] Vṛndāvana Dāsa, however, informs us that Caitanya's 'mood' was always that of a 'servant'.[4] None, therefore, had the courage to inform him that he was the veritable Nārāyaṇa or Kṛṣṇa. But Advaita was bold enough to proclaim Caitanya's divinity in Caitanya's presence. According to Vṛndāvana Dāsa Caitanya felt ashamed when he heard of this proclamation.[5] He also told Śrīvāsa that he did not understand why people were lionising him and neglecting *Kṛṣṇanāma*.[6] Both Sanātana and Rūpa were present in Purī when Advaita made this significant proclamation of Caitanya's divinity.[7] They also worshipped Caitanya as God.[8] Caitanya advised them to learn love mixed with devotion (*Premabhakti*) from Advaita whom he described as the "storekeeper of *bhakti*".[9] Advaita blessed the two brothers.[10]

1. CBH: II, Ch. 2, pp. 129-141, Ch. 6, pp. 156-162.
2. CBH: III, Ch. 9, p. 414: *Āji Āra Kona Avatāra Gāoyā Nāi.| Sarva Avatāramaya Caitanyagosāin.||*
3. CBH: p. 414: The song: "*Śrīcaitanya Nārāyaṇa Karuṇāsāgara.| Dīna duhkhitera Bandhu More Dayā Kara.||*
4. CBH: 415: *Niravadhi Dāsyabhāve Prabhura Vihāra| Muin Kṛṣṇadāsa Bai Nā Bolaye Āra.||* Also, p. 175: *Dāsyabhāve Nāce Prabhu Gaurāngasundara.|* p. 223: *Nimāyi Paṇḍita Satya Śrīkṛṣṇera Dāsa.|* Caitanya also preached *Dāsyabhāva*. CBH: p. 281: Advaita said: "*Sabhākāre Diyācha Uttama Dāsyabhāva| Āmāre Diyācha Prabhu Yata Kichu Rāga.||*
5. CBH: p. 415: *Kṣaṇeka Thākiyā Prabhu Ātmastuti Śuni.| Lajjā Yena Pāite Lāgilā Nyāsamaṇi.||*
6. CBH: p. 416: *Chāḍiya Kṛṣṇera Nāma Kṛṣṇera Kīrtana.| Kī Gāyilā Āmare Ta Bujhāha Ekhana.||*
7. CBH: pp. 417-18.
8. CBH: p. 418.
9. CBH: p. 418, "*Bhaktira Bhāṇḍārī Śrī Advaita Mahāśaya*".
10. CBH: p. 418.

Caitanya advised the two learned brothers to spread *bhakti* among the Hindī-speaking *Paścimās* or Upper/Western Indians.[1]

Later, in a trance, Caitanya confessed that he was really an *Avatāra*, and that his advent as an *Avatāra* had been caused by Advaita Ācārya.[2]

III

Advaita had a predilection for combining *bhakti* with *jnāna*. His own method of worship had possibly no link with the erotic mood. He is said to have worshipped Kṛṣṇa or Kṛṣṇa's *Avatāra* Caitanya as a servant, friend and parent.[3] But he strongly advocated the necessity of mixing devotion with the cultivation of spiritual knowledge. This advocacy made Caitanya very angry. The young saint is said to have physically assaulted the old man. Vṛndāvana Dāsa describes the scene as follows :[4]

> One day, Caitanya and Nityānanda jumped into the Ganges and swam towards Śāntipur. Caitanya told Nityānanda, who was swimming by his side, that Advaita had gone astray by believing in the theory that *Jnāna* or Knowledge was important in spiritual culture. He also informed Nityānanda that he would inflict condign punishment on the old man for his apostasy. Nityānanda smiled but made no comments. Caitanya and Nityānanda were dragged on towards Śāntipur by the strong current.
>
> Advaita meanwhile felt, by dint of his *bhakti*-power, that Caitanya was coming. So he began to teach his pupils the virtues of Knowledge with redoubled enthusiasm with a view to raking up Caitanya's anger. Very soon Caitanya and Nityānanda appeared before him. Haridāsa, the Muhammadan Vaiṣṇava, saluted Caitanya. Acyutānanda, Advaita's immature son, saluted him. But Sītā Devī, Advaita's wife, grew apprehensive. Caitanya said; "Old man! Of devotion and knowledge, which is greater?

1. CBH : p. 418 : *Toma Sabhā Haite Yata Rājasa Tāmasa.| Paścimā Sabhāre Giyā Deha Bhaktirasa.||*
2. CBH : p. 418, "*Sayane Āchilu Muin Kṣiradasāgare.| Jāgāi Ānila More Nāḍāra Huṃkāre*"·||
3. Siddha Caitanyadāsa, "*Śrī Śrī Advaita Prabhura Bhāvavicāra*". *Śrī Śrī Gaurānga Mādhurī*, No. 7, Bhādra, B. S. 1335 (1928) ; also, *Gauranganodde-śadīpikā*, verse 24, p. 16.
4. CBH : Ch. 19, Madhyakhaṇḍa, pp 243-249.

Advaita replied: "A man without knowledge has nothing to do with devotion. Knowledge is decidedly more important than devotion."

Caitanya became terribly angry when he heard this reply. He pushed Advaita from his seat, threw him down on the ground, and showered blows on him.

Sītā Devī jumped forward to save her husband. She said: "Don't kill this old, old Brāhmaṇa. By whom have you been taught to insult an old Brāhmaṇa? If something happens to him you will not go scot-free". Nityānanda did, and said, nothing. He merely smiled. Caitanya at last let the old man go off. Then Caitanya began to shout.

There may be two explanations of Caitanya's unseemly conduct. Firstly, he was never prepared to tolerate any dissentient opinion. Secondly, he was touched to the quick by the apostasy of Advaita, with whom his relation was very intimate. He lost his mental balance when he heard of Advaita's preference for Knowledge. The third possibility is that Vṛndāvana Dāsa merely stated a legend. Advaita probably supported those who felt the necessity of adjusting the principles of *bhakti* with the Brāhmaṇical tradition. But the process of adjustment remained unexplained. He probably advised Caitanya to be cautious. Vṛndāvana Dāsa refers to Caitanya's desperate attempt at suicide by drowning when Advaita took him to task for following the advice of Nityānanda, who represented the radical view.[1] Advaita was opposed to an attempt by Nityānanda and others to create an opinion against Brāhmaṇical conventions. The intellectual in Advaita probably rejected emotional eroticism as a dangerous portent.

IV

Caitanya requested both Advaita and Nityānanda to spread the faith in Bengal.[2] But he was certainly conscious of Advaita's limitations. The old man was never a supporter of unalloyed, non-intellectual *bhakti*. His predilection for the intellectual approach was shared by some of his disciples led by one Kāmadeva Nāgara.

1. CBH ; p. 230.
2. CCM : p. 280 ; "*Acāryere Ājñā Dilā Kariyā Sanmāna.| Ācāṇḍālādire Kariha Kṛṣṇabhaktidāna.||*

They later founded a deviant sect which was not recognised by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Order.[1]

Caitanya was once very much displeased with Advaita when his "manager" Kamalākānta Viśvās wrote a funny letter to Pratāparudra, king of Purī, in which Advaita was described as a God in human form. Kamalākānta also requested the king to pay a substantial sum as a loan. This letter was intercepted by Caitanya who immediately expelled Kamalākānta Viśvās, whom he described as a mad man. But Advaita intervened, and somehow persuaded Caitanya to withdraw the order of expulsion against his disciple and servant.[2] Advaita's relation with Nityānanda was extremely bad. At the slightest opportunity Advaita made insulting remarks on the antecedents and behaviour of Nityānanda.[3] Advaita did not initially support Nityānanda's endeavour to convert Jagāi and Mādhāi, the Brāhmaṇa hooligans of Navadvīpa.[4] But he sent his eldest son Acyuta to Purī as a neophyte under Caitanya's guidance.[5]

Probably Advaita did not develop any link with Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rāmānanda Rāya and the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. In the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* more importance has been attached to Nityānanda than to Advaita.[6] His efforts were not backed by sound organisational strength.

1. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 24, p. 240.
2. CCM : p. 61;
3. Advaita thought that Nityānanda was a drunkard, a fake saint, a man without antecedents. CBH : pp. 216, 219, 248-249. Vṛndāvana Dāsa interprets this 'quarrel' as the "quarrel of love" or *Rasakalaha*. p. 216.
4. CBH : p. 209.
5. CCM : p. 59 ; *Śrīacyutānanda Advaita Ācārya Tanaya| Nīlācale Rahe Prabhura Caraṇa Āśraya.||*
6. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja recognized Advaita as a 'part' *Avatāra* : "*Advaita Ācārya Prabhura Aṃśa Avatāra,*" p. 1. But in his order of preference Nityānanda came first. *Ādilīlā*, Chs. 5 (*Nityānandatattvanirūpaṇa*), and 6 (*Advaitatattvanirūpaṇa*). He follows this order in his mention of the 'branches' in Chs. 11 and 12 of the *Ādilīlā*. In Ch. 6 of the *Ādilītā* he quotes a *Kaḍacā* of Swarūpa Gosvāmin in which Advaita is described as an *Avatāra of* Mahāviṣṇu. See, p. 94 of CCM, Kālnā edition.

Advaita's branch or *Śākhā* had forty-three disciples.[1] After his death they fell apart. Possibly three contending groups were formed. The first group was led by Sītā Devī. The second group was led by Acyutānanda.[2] The third group was led by some other sons of Advaita who were supported by Kāmadeva Nāgara.[3] Ultimately Advaita'a disciples Īśāna Nāgara and Jānu Rāya were able to effect a compromise between Sītā Devī and Acyuta.[4] Meanwhile Advaita's disciples had quarrelled with the followers of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. This quarrel was long and bitter enough to be strongly denounced by Vṛndāvana Dāsa.[5] The group led by Kāmadeva Nāgara probably did not recognise the divinity of Caitanya.[6]

The places where the various disciples of Advaita gradually built up Vaiṣṇava centres are mentioned by Haridāsa Dāsa in Part IV of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhibhāna*, Vol. II. These places are mentioned below. (Pages are mentioned in brackets.)

	Village	District	Name of the Disciple
1.	Ārangāil	Pābnā	Dvija Subhānanda (p. 1825)
2.	Bāblā (near Śāntipur)	Nadiā	Descendants of Advaita (p. 1950)
3.	Bhaitā	Burdwan	Śyāmādāsa Ācārya (p. 1918)
4.	Bhuikhāli	Pābnā	Balarāma Thākura (p. 1917)
5.	Chāndpur	Hooghly (near Saptagrāma)	Yadunandana Ācārya (pp. 1868-1869)
6.	Dasgharā	Hooghly	Kamalākanta Viśvās (p. 1885)
7.	Gopīnāthpur	Bogrā	Nandinī, disciple of Sītā Devī (p. 1861)
8.	Gosvāmī-Rāmpur	Pābnā	Images of Advaita and Sītā Devī (p. 1864)

1. These disciples are mentioned by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, CCM : pp. 58-63.
2. *Premavilāsa*, p. 26.
3. Ibid., p. 240.
4. Ibid., pp. 44-46, *Advaitaprakāśa*, Ch. 21, p. 99, *Narottamavilāsa*, p. 19.
5. CBH : p. 209 : "*Eve Pāpi Sava Advaitera Pakṣa Haiyā.| Gadādhara Nindā Kare Maraye Puḍiyā*".||
6. CCM : p. 62 : "*Ihāra Madhya Jāni Pāche Kona Sākhāgaṇa.| Nā Māne Caitanyamālī Durdaiva Kāraṇa.||* also, p. 63 ; *Ye Ye Laila Śrī Acyutānanda Mata.| Sei Ācāryeragaṇa Mahābhāgavata.||*

Village	District	Name of the Disciple
9. Haripur	Nadiā	Haripriyā, disciple of Sītā Devī (p. 1979)
10. Husiārpur	Sylhet	Narahari, a Kāyastha (p. 1981)
11. Jangalītolā	Māldā	Jangalī, Disciple of Sītā Devī (p. 1871)
12. Jhākpāl	Dacca	Īśāṇa Nāgara (p. 1875)
13. Kāndikhāli	Nadiā	Viṣṇudāsa Ācārya (p. 1838)
14. Keśavpur	Burdwan	Viṣṇudāsa Ācārya[1] (p. 1849)
15. Kuliā[2]	Nadiā	Acyutānanda Gosvāmin (p. 1844)
16. Māṇikyadihi	Nadiā	—— (p. 1925)
17. Navagrāma-Lāuḍ	Sylhet	A monastery of the Advaita order (p. 1892)
18. Navagrāma	Burdwan	Śyāmādāsa Ācārya (p. 1882)
19. Pānātīrtha	Sylhet	Developed as a pilgrim centre by Advaita's disciples (p. 1904)
20. Rāṇāpārā	Burdwan	Śyāmādasa Ācārya. A temple was built here in 1692 (p. 1935)
21. Śāntipur	Nadiā	Five centres were built by five branches of Advaita's descendants (p. 1964)
22. Śiāldi	Dacca	Some descendants lived here. (Vide, Harilāl Chattopādhyāya, *Vaiṣṇava Itihāsa* p. 46)
23. Singārkon	Burdwan	Mahānanda Ācārya, brother of Śyāmādāsa Ācārya, (p. 1965)
24. Teotā	Dacca	Jagadānanda, disciple of Sītā Devī (p. 1881)
25. Uthuli	Dacca	Some descendants lived here (p. 1829)

V

Advaita's wife Sītā Devī was an important figure. It appears that both Sītā Devī and Acyutānanda were faithful followers of

1. Viṣṇudāsa Ācārya was said to be a son of Mādhavendra Purī. He was born when Mādhavendra Purī was a householder. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna*, II, p. 1849.
2. In Kuliā the supporters of Nityānanda quarrelled with those of Advaita for the possession of the local deity. The local zamindar, Mādhavacandra, supported the latter. Haridāsa Dāsa, op. cit. p. 1844.

Caitanya. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja certifies that only the stand taken by Acyuta was correct, and that other ideas prevailing within the Advaita branch were mere trash.[1] The followers of Sītā Devī and Acyuta consolidated their hold in Śāntipur with the help and collaboration of the local Brāhmaṇas.[2]

Ultimately the descendants of Advaita accepted many Brāhmaṇical rituals, including the traditional *Smṛti* rules with regard to the observance of *Ekādaśī* rituals.[3] Advaita had once antagonized the local Brāhmaṇas by cultivating the friendship of 'Yavana' Haridāsa. Later his conservative attitude helped him restore the good relation with the Brāhmaṇa society of Śāntipur.[4]

L.S.S. O'Malley writes : "The Advaita Gossains admit to the Vaisnava community only the Brahmanas and Vaidyas and members of those castes from whose hands a Brahmana may take water. The Adwaitananda Gosains are highly esteemed by the upper classes in Bengal...They avoid much scandal by refusing to initiate women".[5] Bhandarkar noted that most of the followers of Advaita observed caste distinctions.[6]

Within the Advaita order there was always a dominant minority which believed that only Advaita'a interpretation of the theology of the Caitanya movement was correct. The dominant minority once challenged some Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa when they claimed that there were two different *mantras* for the worship of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya. The Śāntipur gosvāmins held the view that only one set of *mantras* was required, because Advaita had worshipped them with only one set of *mantras*. It may be said that the Śāntipur gosvāmins saw no difference between Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya, whereas the Navadvīpa gosvāmins who had, no doubt, studied *Haribhaktivilāsa*, discerned a difference between them. The controversy grew

1. CCM : p. 141 (Kālnā edition) : *Acyutera Yei Mata Sei Mata Sāra.| Āra Jata Mata Sava Haila Chārakhāra.||*
2. Advaita is said to have formed a Brāhmaṇical party in Navadvīpa. *Premavilāsa*, pp. 234-235.
3. Kuladānanda Brahmacārī, *Śrī Śrī Sadgurusanga*, Vol. 5, pp. 87-88.
4. Pramathanātha Tarkabhuṣaṇa, *Bāṅglār Vaiṣṇava Darśaṇa*, pp. 73-74.
5. *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 24 *Parganas* (1914), pp. 69-71.
6. *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, and Minor Religious Systems*, p. 122.

very sharp towards the end of the nineteenth century. The meetings of one party were broken up by the supporters of the other party. The Śāntipur gosvāmins, led by one Nīlamaṇi Gosvāmī, issued a written statement to the effect that only Advaita Ācārya, and none else, had been able to understand the significance of Caitanya's advent.[1]

The movement of Advaita in Śāntipur failed to curb the influence of the local Brāhmaṇas. According to James Long one third of the population of Śāntipur town were Vaiṣṇavas. The town had thirty *Tolas* or Sanskrit schools which were centres of Brāhmaṇical culture.[2]

Śāntipur was also a noted centre of Śākta worship. The obscene songs sung during the Durgā Pūjā festival in Śāntipur were known as *kheuḍ*. This song earned a good deal of notoriety in the eighteenth century.[3] Even womenfolk in respectable Brāhmaṇa families frequently got drunk.[4] "Out of the 56 *Satis* in 1816 in the district of Nadia", wrote Long, "20 were performed in Santipur".[5]

It was mainly with the help of the local weavers that the Śāntipur gosvāmins were able to transform the town into a Vaiṣṇava holy place. The local Chaudhuri zamindārs patronised the Kṛṣṇa cult. They built the Śyāmcānd temple of Śāntipur at the fabulous cost of two *lākhs* of rupees.[6] They initiated the *Rāsayātrā* festival in the middle of the seventeenth century. This is really a famous festival of Bengal in which hundreds of people participate, and which is witnessed by thousands of people.[7]

1. Bimānbihārī Majumdār, *Śrīcaitanyacariter Upādān*, pp. 435-440.
2. J. Long, "The Banks of the Bhāgirathī", *Selected Papers*, ed. M.P. Sāhā, pp. 73-74, Kunjavihārī Gosvāmī of the Advaita school wrote a big book entitled *Brāhmaṇa O Vaiṣṇaver Tāratamyaviṣayaka Siddhānta* in which he adduced *Smārta* evidence of the social and ecclesiastical superiority of the Brāhmaṇas, irrespective of sectarian affiliation.
3. The popularity of these songs is referred to by the eighteenth century poet Bhāratacandra. *Vidyāsundara Granthāvalī* (Basumatī ed.) p. 66: *Nade Śāntipur Haita Kheru Ānāiva.| Nūtana Nūtana Thāte Kheḍu Śunāiva.||*
4. Tārīṇīcaraṇ Chaudhurī, *Sadguru Śrī Śrī Vijayakṛṣṇa*, pp. 33-34.
5. James Long, op. cit., p. 73.
6. The temple was built in 1726. It is a very large *āṭcālā* temple with porch on triple archway. David J. McCutchion, *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal*, p.33.
7. Kālīkṛṣṇa Bhattācāryya, *Śāntipur Paricaya*, p. 243-252.

CHAPTER VII

NITYĀNANDA AVADHŪTA AND THE 'FRIENDLY MOOD'

I

Nityānanda Avadhūta was known as *Premadātā* or Bestower of Love. His charisma was almost equal to that of Caitanya. Like Caitanya he is also a folk-figure. Work of the highest importance was done by him in Bengal.

The Vṛndāvana gosvāmins scarcely refer to him in their works. It has been suggested that the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins were not aware of his activities.[1] But this suggestion is not acceptable. Jīva Gosvāmin was acquainted with Nityānanda.[2] Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin organised, and paid the expenses of the famous *ciḍāmahotasava* held in Pāṇihāti in Nityānanda's honour. Nityānanda's second wife, Jāṇhavā Devī and son Vīrabhadra went to Vṛndāvana long after Nityānanda's death and there met the Vṛndāvana leaders. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, protégé of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins, was acquainted with Jāṇhavā Devī, Vīrabhadra and the *Gopālas*. Jīva Gosvāmin maintained contact with the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal through a regular despatch of epistles and emissaries. It is, therefore, fairly certain that at least Jīva Gosvāmin was perfectly aware of the activities of Nityānanda and his disciples. It is said that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirājā went to Vṛndāvana at Nityānanda's request.[3] He showed respect for the great leader in the chapter on the "The Principle of Nityānanda" in *Caitanyacaritāmṛta*.[4] He also mentioned the Vaiṣṇavas who belonged to "Nityānanda" *Śākhā* or Branch.[5] Yet no authoritative Vaiṣṇava ever ventured to write the biography of

1. Kṣudirām Dās, "Gaura-Kṛṣṇa Upāsanāya Navadvīpa-Vṛndāvana" in *Ācārya Rādhāgovinda Nāth Smārak Grantha*, p. 50.
2. *Bhaktiratnākara*, Canto I, verse 675.
3. This request he heard in a dream: CCM, pp. 21-22: *Naihtāi Nikate Jhāmatpur Nāme Grāma.| Tānhi Svapne Dekhā Dilā Nityānanda Rāma.||*
4. CCM, Ādilīlā, ch. 5.
5. CCM, Ādilīlā, ch. 11.

Nityānanda.[1] One may very well ask why no authoritative biography of Nityānanda was written. The answer to this question is not far to seek. Nityānanda's spiritual mood or '*bhāva*' was that of a servant or friend.[2] He is not known to have preached *madhurarati* or *Ujjvalarasa*. The twelve or more *Gopālas* who regarded Nityānanda as their master, and who were particularly active in Hooghly, Nadiā Burdwān and Bīrbhūm, worshipped Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's elder brother Balarāma as adolescent cowherds, and not as the supranatural lovers of milkmaids. The worshippers of the Nityānanda school regarded themselves as cowherds, as male friends of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.[3] Their spiritual mood was different from the ideą of those who worshipped Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā from the erotic point of view.[4] The Vṛndāvana gosvāmins and their supporters in Bengal were mostly *manjarī* worshippers, or worshippers of the *madhurarati* mood. It was, therefore, quite natural for them to be indifferent towards a man whose spiritual ideal was quite different from theirs. The 'friendly mood' is described in the scriptures of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins as one of the several moods which are inferior to the erotic mood.

Secondly, Nityānanda paid scant attention to caste and caste-rules. This liberal social attitude was disliked by the Vaiṣṇavas who wanted to "Sanskritize" Vaiṣṇavism in accordance with the Brāmaṇical scriptures. This endeavour is clearly seen in the ponderous tomes of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins who spent their lives in an unrelenting search for the classical link. They stubbornly

1. A work named (*Nityānandaprabhura*) *Vaṁśavistāra* is attributed to the authorship of Vṛndāvana Dāsa, It is regarded as an Appendix of CBH. But in this work far more importance has been attached to Vīrabhadra and Jāṇhavā Devī than to Nityānanda. According to Sukumar Sen this work was not written by Vṛndāvana Dāsa. *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, I, I, p. 343.
2. CBH : pp. 154-55 : *Nityānandasvarūper Svabhāva Sarvathā| Tilārdheka Dāsyabhāva Nāhika Anyathā||...Nityānandasvarūper Ei Vākya Mana| Caitanya Īśvara Muin Āmi Ekajana.||*
3. CBH : p. 378 : *Śingā Vetra Vaṁśī Chāndādauḍi Gunjāmālā.| Save Dharilena Gopālera Aṁśakalā.*
4. "Dāsyabhāva" theology is elaborately explained in *Preyobhaktirasārṇava* by Nayanānanda Thākur of Mangaldihi. (ed. Haridāsa Dāsa)

refused to accommodate any folk element, apart from that which they found in the Vaiṣṇava myths, in their philosophical, ritualistic and aesthetic formulations. Naturally they could not accommodate in their work the ideas of a man who preached social liberalism, and who lived with the masses. Nityānanda was a *Svarūpa* or a wandering ascetic who later reverted back to the condition of a householder.[1] Nityānanda married twice, and ultimately grew rich. The reversion of Nityānanda to the status of a householder was possibly disliked by the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins, who were ascetics without any possibility of such 'retrogression'.

It was necessary for the supporters of the Vṛndāvana dogma to administer a check to Nityānanda's influence in Bengal. The check was very necessary for sectarian cohesion and the consolidation of the orthodox point of view. A biography of Nityānanda could not be written after the Vṛndāvana dogma had been accepted even by the Vaiṣṇavas of Nityānanda branch, such as Gadādhara and the poet Jñānadāsa. Were such a biography with an exposition of the faith of Nityānanda written, the Vṛndāvana leaders like Jīva Gosvāmin and their disciples in Bengal, such as Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, would have found it extremely difficult to disseminate the Vṛndāvana dogma as the only and unquestionable version of the unwritten ideals of Caitanya.

II

Many details about the life of Nityānanda are stated in Vṛndāvana Dāsa'a *Caitanyabhāgavata* and Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa's *Gaurāṅgavijaya*.[2] Vṛndāvana Dāsa collected the data on Nityānanda's life from Nityānanda himself.[3] Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa collected them partly

1 This is Sukumar Sen's interpretation of the word *Svarūpa*, quoted by Dimock, *The Place of the Hidden Moon*, p. 40.

2. Questions have been raised as to the authenticity of *Gaurāṅgavijaya* 'Sāhitya Pariṣad Patrikā', B.E. 1388, No. 3 : Prabhāt Mukhopādhyāya, "Śrīcaitanyer Bāṅglā Caritgulir Aitihāsikatā".

3. CBH : p. 5 : *Antarjāmī Nityānanda Balilā Kautuke.| Caitanyacarita Kichu Likhite Pustake.|*

from *Gopāla* Dhananjaya Paṇḍita and partly from Nityānanda's talks which he overheard.[1] But these two accounts are different from each other in many points. Before these two accounts are taken up for discussion some facts, which are very relevant to a reconstruction of the career of the great leader, are stated below.

Nityānanda was born in Ekacakra or Ekcākā village in Bīrbhūm. In Bīrbhūm religion was highly syncretic. Bīrbhūm is a tribal region inhabited by Sāntāls, Bāgdis, Doms, Mālos, Lohārs, Hāḍis, Śunḍīs, Muchis, and sundry other scheduled tribes and castes. Criss-crossed by rivers big and small, which get dry in summer, Bīrbhūm was never a centre of Brāhmaṇical culture. It was once a stronghold of Buddhism. Buddhist images have been discovered in Nalhāti and Mayūreśvar. The Śaivas and the Śāktas waged a long war of attrition against the local Buddhists. In many places Buddhist images and idols were transformed into Śiva and Dharma idols.[2]

The Śaiva-Śākta influence was particularly strong in the Mayūreśvar area to which Ekcākā village belongs. The Śaivas and Śāktas set up outposts in important places of the district probably with a view to continuing their assault on the Buddhist strongholds. Their outposts, known as *Pīthas*, are located in six places in Bīrbhūm, namely, Nandīpur, Phullarā, Tārapithā, Nalhāti and Bakreśvar.[3]

Of the three hundred and forty-two Śaiva-Śākta temples of Bengal, catalogued, classified and measured by David McCutchion, twenty-nine are located in the villages of Bīrbhūm.[4]

Śaivism and Śāktaism were more popular and diffused in Bīrbhūm than any other Brāhmaṇical cult. Dubrājpur, where the Santāl element is predominant, has six Śiva temples. Famous for its legendary association with Caṇḍīdāsa, Nānur was a notable centre of Śaiva-Śākta worship. The Mayūreśvara area has at least

1. *Gaurāṅgavijaya*: p. 45: *Kahiche Nitāi Gadādhara Dhananjaye.| Saṃsarge Śuniyā Ācho Kahilu Niścaye.||*
2. Amalendu Mitra, *Rāḍer Saṃskṛiti O Dharmathākur*, pp. 6, 45, 67.
3. Govindagopāl Mukhopādhyāya. "Tantras in Bengal" *International Sanskrit Conference*, Vol. I, pp. 87-88: The Bakreśvara *Pītha* has a hot spring.
4. D. McCutchion, *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal.*

five Śiva temples. At the folk-level the Dharma and the Manasā cults were extraordinarily popular throughout Bīrbhūm. The oldest extant temple dedicated to Dharma is the Dharmarāja temple of Kabilāspur in Rājnagar Police Station. It was built in 1643. According to Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya who first studied the cults of Bīrbhūm nearly fifty years back at the specific spots, Dharma was a degenerate form of Buddhism and a product of the mutual assimilation of Hindu and Buddhist influences at the lower levels of the Hindu caste-structure. Its social aim was to bring about caste integration at the grass-root level. It was patronised by the Brāhmanical landlords for maintaining cohesion and discipline among their low-caste servants and body-guards.[1] Dharma in West Bengal is generally represented by a piece of stone which in some places looks unmistakably phallic. The priests of this cult belong to as many as twenty-six different castes and tribes including the *Rāḍī* Brāhmaṇa caste.[2] In Bīrbhūm the relation between Dharma and Manasā, the snake-goddess, is that of a brother and sister wedded to each other. Their position closely resembles that of Yama and Yamī of the tenth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛkveda*.[3]

Another cult which was popular in Bīrbhūm in the middle of the eleventh century was the Nātha-Yogī cult, the influence of which still lingers in Nandīpur, Tārāpītha and the adjoining villages.[4]

The Śiva-Śakti cult had to compromise with the predominance of Dharma and Manasā. In many places Śiva was simply fused with Dharma. In 1815 Padre Ward noticed this fusion and wondered at it. He regarded Dharma as "another form of Śiva".[5] Śiva worshippers formed an aggressive coalition with the Dharma worshippers against the Buddhist and the Nātha-Yogīs.[6] The

1. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Gauḍa-Vanga Saṃskṛiti*, pp. 76-79.
2. Amalendu Mitra, op. cit, pp. 251-252.
3. Sukumar Sen, *Rūparāmer Dharmamangal*, 2nd ed. Intro. p. I. Amalendu Mitra, op. cit., pp. 73-80 gives some instances of the worship of Dharma and Manasā as a married couple.
4. Gaurīhara Mitra, *Bīrbhūmer Itihās*, Vol. I, pp. 67-68.
5. W. Ward, *A View of the History, Literature and Religion of the Hindoos*, 1815, Vol. II, p. 184.
6. Amalendu Mitra, op. cit., p. 67.

Gājana ritual of Śiva is similar to that of the *Gājana* of Dharma.[1] In many Bīrbhūm villages Dharma and Kālī are simultaneously worshipped.[2] The "swinging" festivals of Śiva and Dharma have a similar character in Pāikor village, which is also a centre of Manasā worship.[3]

Vaiṣṇavism formed a new element in the tribal religious milieu of Bīrbhūm. L.S.S. O'Malley thinks that Jayadeva made Vaiṣṇavism popular in Bīrbhūm in the twelfth century.[4] It is, however, very difficult to say when Vaiṣṇavism really grew popular in the district. But it had to make a compromise with the Dharma cult. When the Caitanya movement grew popular in Bīrbhūm and the neighbouring districts, Dharma had to partially 'Vaiṣṇavise' himself. In thirty-two different villages of Bīrbūm, Burdwan and Sāntāl Parganās, Dharma has such Vaiṣṇava names as Kālā Rāya, Lālcānd, Śyāma Rāya and Svarupanārāyāṇa.[5] A Kṛṣṇa-song is sung during the Manasā worship in Saptapur village. This song deals with the destruction of the reptile Kāliya by Kṛṣṇa.[6] Dharma rituals in Bīrbhūm and Burdwan show clear traces of the Vaiṣṇava festivals of *Rathayātrā* and *Snānayātrā*.[7] In some villages within the jurisdiction of Nānur Police Station the Vaiṣṇava practice of using *Tulasī* leaves during idol-worship is imitated by the Dharma priests.[8]

Benoykumar Sarkar once remarked that in Bengal the Aryans were 'un-Aryanised' by their association with the prevailing folk-cults. This phenomenon he described as "Pariahnisation of the Aryans".[9] The religious antagonisms and combinations in Bīrbhūm

1. Ibid., pp. 67-71.
2. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Bīrbhūm Vivaraṇa*, II, pp. 5-9.
3. Ibid.
4. *Bengal District Gazetteers, Birbhum* (1910), p. 32.
5. Amalendu Mitra, op. cit., pp. 95, 248-251.
6. Ibid., pp. 74-75.
7. Ibid., p. 80.
8. Ibid., p. 81.
9. B.K. Sarkar, *Villages and Towns as Social Patterns*, pp. 187-192; *Bānglāya Deśi Videśī*, p. 33.

were an indication of the pariahnisation of *Puranic* faiths like the Śaiva-Śākta cults and Vaiṣṇavism.

III

In his early youth Nityānanda must have noticed the syncretic tendencies outlined above, and imbibed the spirit of syncretism from his environment. Once there was some confusion about Nityānanda's caste status. Even Caitanya is said to have rebuked Śrīvāsa when he allowed Nityānanda to be his honoured guest. Caitanya is said to have expressed his concern at the uncertainty of Nityānanda's caste and family antecedents.[1] Nityānanda's father, Hāḍāi Paṇḍita, was an *Ojhā* which literally means a medicine-man or shaman. "Hāḍāi Paṇḍita" may mean some sort of 'caste-priest' of the untouchable Hāḍi caste.

Vṛndāvana Dāsa, however, describes Nityānanda's father as a '*Vipra*' or Brāhmaṇa who was a priest and a prosperous householder.[2] Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa also refers to Nityānanda's father as a Brāhmaṇa named Mukunda.[3] Nityānanda's mother was a lady named Padmāvatī. The account of Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa makes it clear that the Brāhmaṇa Mukunda was not a Vaiṣṇava, but probably a *Pancopāsaka* with Śaiva sympathies. Mukunda is said to have lived in Benaras for a long time. He also visited other holy places including Kurukṣetra.[4] The village Ekcāka, where Nityānanda was born, had the Ekacakreśvara image of Śiva.[5] Vṛndāvana Dāsa mentions the holy places visited by Nityānanda when he was a roaming *Avadhūta*. Some of these places were Śaiva pilgrim centres, such as Mayureśvara and Bakreśvara (near Ekcākā), Vārāṇasī,

1. CBH : 168 : Caitanya said : *Ei Avadhūtere Kena Rākha Nirantara.| Kona Gotra Kona Kūla Kichui Nā Jāni| Parama Udāra Tumi Balilāng Āmi.||*
2. CBH : p. 143 : *Sei Grāme Vaise Vipra Hāḍāi Paṇḍita.|...Kivā Kṛṣikarme Kivā Yajamāna Ghare| Kivā Hāte Kivā Bāte Yata Karma Kare.||*
3. *Gaurāngavijaya*, p. 79, where Ākhaṇḍala Ācārya describes Nityānanda's father as *Brāhmaṇaputra* or Brāhmaṇa's son. Also, GGD, p. 19, verse 40.
4. *Gaurāngavijaya*, p. 65 : *Niravadhi Karila Vāsa Rahi Kāśīpurī*. etc.
5. BRK, p, 444 : verse 420.

Śivakāncī, and Haridvāra.[1] It was only after his meeting with Mādhavendra Purī that Nityānanda is said to have decided to live in Vṛndāvana.[2] In all probability Nityānanda was a Śaiva *Avadhūta* converted into Vaiṣṇavism by Mādhavendra Purī. Nityananda surreptitiously arrived at Navadvīpa directly from Vṛndāvana as a 'great' *Avadhūta*, wearing a blue garb, and carrying a formidable mace on his wide shoulders.[3] He had possibly a 'joking' relationship with the Buddhists. At one place, referred to by Vṛndāvana Dāsa as 'Bauddhālaya', Nityānanda asked the Buddhists some questions. Getting no reply from them, he kicked their heads. But they laughed and ran off.[4] It should be noted that mace-holding *yogīs* are sculptured on the outer walls of the famous Khajuraho temples.

Cuḍāmaṇī Dāsa gives a different account of Nityānanda's career. According to him Nityānanda renounced the world after meeting Caitanya in Navadvīpa. This meeting was sought for, and arranged by Nityānanda himself.[5] Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa avers that Nityānanda worshipped Caitanya in Ekcākā even before this meeting.[6] His career was predetermined by Mādhavendra Purī.[7] Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa gives a vivid account of the ceremonies and feasts arranged by Nityānanda's affluent father just before he started for Navadvīpa. Both the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and the *Caṇḍī* were recited by Vaiṣṇava and Śākta priests. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes were served to the assembled guests. Only Nityānanda ate a vegetarian lunch,[8]

1. CBH : pp. 49-57.
2. CBH : p. 56.
3. CBH : pp. 145-46 : *Mahā Avadhuta Veśa Prakāṇḍa Śarīra.| Mahā Eka Stambha Skandhe Gati Nahe Sthira.|| Nīlavastra Paridhāna Nilavastra Māthe.|...*
4. CBH : p. 54 : *Tave Nityānanda Gelā Bauddhera Bhavane*, etc.
5. *Gaurāngavijaya*, p. 68 : Nityānanda's servant Śubhāi was sent to Navadvīpa with a letter from Nityānanda to Caitanya.
6. Ibid. p. 67.
7. Ibid. pp. 2-
8. Ibid. pp. 67-74.

Two important points emerge from the contradictory accounts of Vṛndāvana Dāsa and Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa which require emphasis. Firstly Nityānanda was as much a worshipper of Śiva as of Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa before his meeting with Mādhavendra Purī. Secondly Nityānanda's father had no definite preference for Kṛṣṇa worship. It may not be unreasonable to assume that Nityānanda's noted liberalism in matters relating to caste was, at least partly, a reflection of his appreciation of the religious syncretism which characterised the culture of his home district. He was also a man of long and varied experience which he gathered from his travels throughout the length and breadth of India. Except Caitanya himself no other leader of the contemporary Vaiṣṇava movement of Bengal had travelled so much and so long as the ebullient *Avadhūta*. Nityānanda's attitude was always rebellious. According to a contemporary Vaiṣṇava poet he obeyed no body in this world.[1] His character and efforts had a peculiar individuality which rendered him suspect in Advaita's estimation.

IV

Vṛndāvana Dāsa's account makes it clear that Caitanya developed for Nityānanda an intense affection though he was misunderstood by the other Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa. His ecstasy was often unpleasant. The following patterns of Nityānanda's behaviour are mentioned in *Caitanyabhāgavata*:

> He regarded Mālinī, Śrīvasa's wife, as his mother, and behaved like a suckling infant in her presence.[2]
>
> At the slightest opportunity Nityānanda danced, jumped and ran. Very often he shed off his clothes.[3]

1. Jnānadāsa: "*Matta Siṃha Yena/ Garajana Ghana Ghana/ Jagamājhe Kāhu Nā Māna //* Harekṛṣna Mukhopādhyāya, *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, p. 373.
2. CBH: p. 163: *Āpani Tuliyā Hāta Bhāta Nāhi Khāya / Putraprāya Kari Anna Mālinī Yogāya.//* p. 200: *Nityānanda Dekhile Tānhāra Stana Jhare./ Vālyabhāve Nityānanda Stana Pāna Kare./*
3. CBH: pp. 199: *Ānande Nā Jāne Bāhya Kon Karma Kare./ Digamvara Hai Vastra Bāndhilen Śire.//*

Everyday he swam fearlessly in the Ganges which was infested with flesh-eating alligators.[1]

Nityānanda played with urchins and teased small girls.[2]

The line between Nityānanda's pranks and ecstasy was never clear. Once *Yavana* Haridāsa and Nityānanda were chased through the narrow streets of Navadvīpa by two fat and notorious scoundrels named Jagāi and Mādhāi. Vṛndāvana Dāsa's vivid description of the chase is not very different from the representation of the inevitable chase in a Keystone comedy.[3]

Nityānanda pursued the original idea of fraternisation with the Supreme God. He had some other ideas, the hints of which lie scattered in the biographies. He once advised a Vaiṣṇava named Bhāskara Dāsa to popularize the worship of the Śrī idol.[4] Nityānanda also worshipped Caitanya.[5] His permanent 'mood' (*bhāva*) was that of a servant.[6] He and his followers worshipped Kṛṣṇa as cowherds.[7] Completely disregarding caste he lived with the Śūdras.[8]

Nityānanda was also regarded as the incarnation of Balarāma.[9] With a view to silencing his critics Vṛndāvana Dāsa wrote that according to the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* even Balarāma participated in the *Rāsa*-festival.[10] According to Śiśirkumār Ghosh, Nityānanda had an unshakable belief in the immanence of God. He thought

1. CBH : p. 202 : *Varṣāte Gangāra Dheu Kumbhīra Veṣṭita| Tāhāte Bhāsaye Tilārdheka Nahi Bhīta.|*
2. CBH : pp. 208-209 : Description of Nityānanda's pranks by 'Yavana' Haridāsa.
3. CBH : p. 207 : *Dhara Dhara Dhara Bali Dharivāre Yāya| Āthe Vyāthe Nityānanda Haridāsa Dhāya.||* etc.
4. Jayānanda, *Caitanyamangala*, *Uttarakhaṇḍa*, p. 532, verse 106.
5. CBH : p. 374 : *Sadāi Yapen Nāma Śrīkṛṣṇa Caitanya.| Svapneo Nāhika Nityānanda Mukhe Anya.||* p. 378 : *Niravadhi Śrīkṛṣṇacaitanya Saṃkīrtana| Karāyena Karena Laiyā Sarvagaṇa,||*
6. CBH : p. 154 : "*Nityānandasvarūpera Svabhāva Sarvathā| Tilārdheka Dāsyabhāva Nāhika Anyathā*".
7. CBH : p. 378 : *Śingāvetra Vaṃśī Chānḍādauḍi Gunjāmālā| Sabhe Dharilena Gopālera Aṃśakalā.*
8. CBH : p. 393 : *Śūdrera Āśrame Se Thāken Sarvakṣaṇe.||*
9. CCM : *Ādilīlā* Ch. 5.
10. CBH : Ādilīlā Ch. 1.

that man's relation with God was direct. He was opposed to sectarianism and dogmatism. His approach was non-intellectual and, therefore, highly effective.[1] Vṛndāvana Dāsa informs us that Nityānanda was not willing to permit him to prepare an elaborate hagiology.[2]

Considerable importance must be attached to Nityānanda's idea of fraternization with God. This idea was the negation of the erotic concept of the sports of Kṛṣṇa. It also fully conformed to the contemporary social norms. Worship of Kṛṣṇa as a servant or brother could easily be practised by householders. Fraternization with God might easily strengthen the brotherhood of men in a plural society. In pursuit of this idea Nityānanda disregarded caste rules and lived with the Śūdras. Girijāśankar Rāychaudhurī says that Nityānanda was responsible for the slackening of the caste rules in Bengal. All credit goes to him for the gradual evolution of a liberal Vaiṣṇava society in Bengal which did not observe caste distinctions. Rāychaudhurī quotes the opinion of Brajendranāth Śīl, the eminent scholar and professor of philosophy, to the effect that "Nityānanda was the greatest democrat in the history of Bengal".[3] In the absence of a political theory of liberalism the spiritual idea of fraternisation with God was definitely a source of social liberalism in a caste-based society. Dimock opines that "Nityānanda may have been responsible for whatever egalitarian tendencies Vaiṣṇava movement shows". This is a plausible thesis, since it is known that the followers of Nityānanda took the first step towards spreading the cult among the tribal population of Bengal. They spread the cult among the *Hājongs* of the Gāro Hills bordering on Mymensing. Vaiṣṇavas of the Nityānanda school were active in Tripura.[2]

1. *Amiyanimāyicarit.* Vol. 5, 3rd ed. pp. 173-175; Vol. 6, 8th ed. pp. 166-167.
2. CBH : p. 391 : *Yāra Yāra Sange Nityānandera Vihāra/ Save Nandagoṣṭhī Gopa Gopī Avatāra.// Nityānandasvarūpera Niṣedha Lāgiyā/ Pūrvanāma Nā Likhilā Vidita Kariyā.//*
3. Girijāśankar Rāychaudhurī, *Śrī Caitanyadeva O Tāhār Pāṛṣadagaṇa*, pp. 89-90, 96.

1. Dimock, op. cit., p. 51.
2. GVA : pp, 1859-1860, See "Gāro Pāhār".

V

Both Advaita and Nityānanda, therefore, may be said to have eschewed the erotic concept. Caitanya requested them to spread Vaiṣṇavism among the people of Bengal.[1] He did not ask Gadadhara Paṇḍita and Narahari Sarkār, who believed in the erotic idea, to organise any mission in Bengal. Caitanya invested Sanātana and Rūpa with certain tasks pertaining to the reconstruction of Vaiṣṇava theology, and the preservation of the holy spots of Vṛndāvana. For Bengal and the Bengalis Caitanya requisitioned the services of two outstanding leaders who certainly did not practise *madhurarati* worship. It may, therefore, be said that Caitanya's spiritual ideal was not really different from that of Advaita and Nityānanda. If this reasoning is accepted, the whole Vṛndāvana dogma would appear to be a fabrication imposed on the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas by the *manjarī* worshippers and the ideologues of 'unlibidinous eroticism' after the death of Caitanya, Nityānanda and Advaita Ācārya.

Nityānanda's follower Vṛndāvana Dāsa does not attach any importance to Rādhā, the milkmaids, and the *manjarīs*.[2] He does not mention the names of Narahari Sarkār of Śrīkhaṇḍa who was the theologian of "*Gauranāgaravāda*". He very categorically states that the habit of some people to regard Caitanya as a *Nāgara* or clandestine lover was absolutely perverse because Caitanya never even cast a glance at women (not related to him).[3] Caitanya was doubtless an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. If, however, he was not a *Nāgara* or clandestine lover of other peoples' wives, he must have

1. CCM : p. 35 : *Nityānandarāme Pāṭhāyilā Gauḍadeśe| Tenho Bhakti Pracārilā Aśeṣeviśeṣe.|* p. CCM. p. 280 : *Ācāryere Ājñā Dilā Kariyā Sanmāna| Ācaṇḍālādire Kariha Kṛṣṇabhaktidāna.|| Nityānande Ājñā Dilā Yāha Gauḍa Deśe| Anargala Premabhakti Kariha Prakāśe.||*
2. Vṛndāvana Dāsa mentions only once that Caitanya had once the trance of a milkmaid. CBH : p. 171 : *Konadina Gopībhave Karena Rodana.|* etc. But it is also stated by him that Caitanya had trances in all moods; *Sarvabhave Āvesita Prabhu Visvaṃbhara.* CBH : p. 171.
3. CBH : p. 90 : *Ataeva Yata Mahāmahima Sakale| Gaurāṅganāgarahena Stava Nāhi Bale.||*

represented Kṛṣṇa of the 'friendly mood'. This seems to be the purport of the CBH.

The biographical accounts do not put any noticeable stress on any link between Advaita and Nityānanda on the one hand, and Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rāmānanda Rāya, Sanātana Gosvāmin and Rūpa Gosvāmin on the other. Svarūpa Dāmodara *alias* Purusottama Ācārya, son of Padmagarbha Ācārya of Bhitādiyā on the Brahmaputra river, was a non-entity before he was permanently attached to Caitanya's headquarters. According to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Svarūpa Dāmodara was a great scholar, a good singer, and a great friend of Advaita and Nityānanda. He closely examined all writings before they were presented to Caitanya.[1] In the absence of Advaita, Nityānanda, Śrīvāsa, Murāri Gupta and other prominent Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa, Caitanya, lost in ecstasy, began to lean heavily on svarūpa Dāmodara, who presumably became Caitanya's personal ecretary. An East Bengali poet was acquainted with Khanja Bhagavān Ācārya. The poet wrote a Vaiṣṇava *Nātaka*. According to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, one had to be a good grammarian and rhetorical expert before one could write any poem or play on *Kṛṣṇalīlā*. Svarūpa was not willing to patronise 'rustic' (*Grāmya*) poets, who were not supposed to be versed in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *Siddhānta* or theological standpoint. The East Bengali poet wrote an invocatory verse in which he described Caitanya as the incarnation of Jagannātha. This conclusion is said to have militated against the theology propounded by Rūpa Gosvāmin in *Laghu Bhāgavatāmṛtaṃ* and Jīva Gosvāmin in *Bhagavatsaṃdarbha*. So Svarūpa called the poet a 'fool' who had caused his own ruin. The poet was described by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavisāja as "a heron among the swans".[2] This episode makes it clear that even in Purī there was a distinct group of Vaiṣṇavas, led by Svarūpa Dāmodara, which brushed aside any theory or view which might not agree with their theological concepts. Raghunātha Dāsa was a good friend of Nityānanda. He went to Purī

1. CCM : Kālnā ed. pp. 328-329. Also. Haridāsa Dāsa, *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, pp. 217-218.
2. "*Haṃsamadhye Vaka*". Ibid.

and become a neophyte under Svarūpa Dāmodara's guidance.[1] Raghunātha Dāsa later became a Gosvāmin of Vṛndāvana and apparently forgot Nityānanda and Advaita. His *Dānakelicintāmaṇi* begins with a salutation to Caitanya, his close companions, Nityānanda, Advaita, and their companions.[2] But Advaita and Nityānanda are not mentioned in his *Muktācaritra* and *Stavāvalih*. It seems that one of the functions of Svarūpa Dāmodara and his friends in Purī was to build up a group which would ultimately have no link with Advaita and Nityānanda. Nityānanda was perhaps aware of the growing alienation of his 'branch' from those who believed in *Madhurarati*. He tried to fraternise with Gadādhara Paṇḍita, the incarnation of Rādhā.[3] One of his disciples named Gadādhara Dāsa was also allowed to practise worship after the *madhurabhāva*.[4] But the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins yet did not attach any importance to his ideas or movement.

Svarūpa Dāmodara wrote a *Kaḍacā* which was taken to Vṛndavana by Raghunātha Dāsa. This *Kaḍacā* or Note-Book was consulted by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, who refers to it as one of the primary sources for the reconstruction of the theology of the Caitanya movement.[5] Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja tries to show that the erotic theology of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was given the final shape during the terminal *līlā* of Caitanya in Purī. In order to describe both the terminal *līlā* of Caitanya and the erotic theology, he used the undisovered *Kaḍacā* of Svarūpa Dāmodara.[6] Rādhāgovinda Nāth thinks that Svarūpa

1. CCM : p. 498 : *Hāsi Mahāprabhu Raghunāthe Kahilā.| Tomāra Upadeśtā Kari Svarūpere Dilā. Sādhya-Sādhanatattva Śikha Ihāra Sthāne| Āmi Yata Nāhi Jāni Iha Tāhā Jāne.||*
2. *Dānakelicintāmaṇi*, ed. Haridāsa Dāsa, p. 1.
3. CBH : p. 401 : *Nityānanda Gadādhare Ye Prīta Antare| Ihā Kahibāre Śakti Īśvare Se Dhare.||...Gadādharadevera Saṃkalpa Eirūpa| Nityānandanindakera Nā Dekhena Mukha.||*
4. CBH : p. 379 : *Gopībhāve Gadādhara Dāsa Mahāśaya.| Haiyā Āchen Ati Parānandamaya.||*
5. CCM : p. 65 : *Prabhura Ye Śeṣalīa Svarūpa Dāmodara| Sūtrarūpe Gānthilen Granthera Bhitara|*
6. CCM : p. 570 : *Svarūpādi Gosāin Āra Raghunātha Dāsa| Ei Dui Kaḍacāte E Līlā Prakāśa||...Sekāle Ei Dui Rahe Mahāprabhura Pāśe| Āra Sava Kaḍacākartā Rahe Dūradeśe||*

Dāmodara's *Kaḍacā* was not "seen" by Kavi Karṇapūra.[1] But according to Śivaprasād Bhāttācārya, Karṇapūra *saw* it.[2] Karṇapūra used the *Kaḍacā* to show that Svarūpa Dāmodara was not totally oblivious of the other cardinals of Caitanya who lived in Bengal. Karṇapūra explains Svarūpa Dāmodara's concept of the *Pancatattva* doctrine in the following manner:[3]

Caitanya	:	represents Kṛṣṇa.
Nityānanda	:	represents Balarāma.
Advaita	:	represents Śiva.
Śrīvāsa and others	:	represent real devotion.
Gadādhara Paṇḍita	:	represents the *Sakti* (power of the female principle) of devotion.

Karṇapūra's account makes it clear that Svarūpa Dāmodara was not totally indifferent to the view-points represented by the important Bengali leaders of the Caitanya movement. But Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja would have us believe that the *Kaḍacā* of Svarūpa Dāmodara laid emphasis only on the erotic view-point. That Svarūpa Dāmodara was uncompromising with regard to the purity of the theology of his own interpretation was sought to be proved by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja by a timely reference to 'the heron among swans', the unfortunate poet from East Bengal. Very probably the *Kaḍacā* put equal emphasis on all *moods*. But in accordance with the desire of Raghunātha Gosvāmin and other important theoreticians of *Madhurarati*, Kṛṣṇdāsa Kavirāja merely used only those portions of the *Kaḍacā* which emphasized *madhurarati*, and the role of the milkmaids.[4] The original *Kaḍacā* was totally destroyed by some sectarian Vaiṣṇavas who found it impossible to accommodate any other 'mood'. A copy of the *Kaḍacā* might have been preserved

1. *Caitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 37.
2. Śivaprasād Bhattācārya, "Two Ascriptions Examined", *Our Heritage*, January-June, 1956, Vol. IV, Part I, p. 13, Note, 53.
3. *Gauraganoddeśadīpikā*, 4th ed. Baharampur, p. 7 : verse-2; pp. 9-10. verses-9, 10; also, p. 11, verse-13. The *Pancatattva* is explained in verses 9-11 in pp. 9-10.
4. For instance, Caitanya's dialogue with Rāmānanda Rāya in Ch. 8 of CCM, II.

in Bengal. But after the ascendancy of the Vṛndāvana dogma in Bengal it was consigned to the limbo of forgotten things.

The association of Rūpa and Sanātana with Caitanya was never long and continuous. Sanātana Gosvāmin stayed with Caitanya in Prayāga for two months.[1] But Sanātana and Rūpa do not corroborate it; nor do they say that they learnt the theology of Vaiṣṇavism from Caitanya. The gosvāmins even hardly refer in their works to any authoritative utterance of Caitanya. "In the actual building up of their systems of philosophy and theology there is no reference to the life, personality or views of the Master himself".[2] What, then, is the link between what they wrote and what Caitanya is supposed to have taught them?

According to Vṛndāvana Dāsa Caitanya did not *always* preach a particular theory.[3] But Kṛṣṇdāsa Kavirāja's account is full of stress on the *madhurabhāva*. Caitanya always says: 'this is apparent; but say more on the main point'. It is interesting to note that even Rāmānanda Rāya did not discard the 'servile' or the 'friendly' mood. But according to Kṛṣṇdāsa Kavirāja, Caitanya said: 'this is apparent; say more on the main point'.[4] The theology, as enunciated in CCM, does not show any trace of evolutionary development. Once a tenet or idea is articulated, it remains fixed and indubitable or unquestionable for ever. Moreover, the stupendous learning which forms the chief feature of the scripture prepared by the gosvāmins was a glaring denial of the theory that simple devo-

1. CCM : p. 29 and p, 405 : *Ei Mata Mahaprabhu Dui Māsa Paryanta.| Śikhāyilā Tāre Bhakti Siddhāntera Anta.||*
2. S.K. De, *Bengal's Contribution to Sanskrit Liierature and Studies in Bengal Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 93.
3. CBH : p. 400 : *Ei Mata Bhāvarange Caitanyagosāin.| Eka Kathā Nā Kahen Ekajanā Thāin.||*
4. CCM : Kālnā ed. *Madhyalīlā*. pp. 276-281 (Ch. 8) : *Rāya Kahe Dāsyaprema Sarvasādhya Sāra...Prabhu Kahe Eho Vāhya Āge Kaha Āra.|| Rāya Kahe Sakhyaprema Sarvasādhya Sāra...Prabhu Kahe Ehottama Āge Kaha Āra.|| Rāya Kahe Vātsalyaprema Sarva Sādhya Sāra...Prabhu Kahe Ehottama Āge Kaha Ara.||* When Rāmānanda said : "*Kāntāprema Sarvasādhyasāra*, Caitanya said : "*Ei Sādhyāvadhi Suniścaya*". But he requested Rāmānanda to explain this concept.

tion is far better than the cultivation of knowledge.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja does not, however, belittle the importance of *Dāsybhāva* or the mood of a servant. In fact *Dāsyabhāva* was the inevitable consequence of the love one might feel for Kṛṣṇa.[1] But the implication of this theory was that a 'servant-devotee' had to accept the concept of Kṛṣṇa as the transcendental lover of the transcendental milkmaids without asking any question. Kṛṣṇadāsa averred that a Vaiṣṇava had the right to worship Kṛṣṇa in one of the moods 'currently fashionable in Vraja'.[2] But the devotee had to recognise the sublimity of *madhurarasa* irrespective of his own spiritual mood. The best mood was that of the milkmaids.[3] Caitanya himself showed Rāmānanda Rāya the materialisation of *Rasarāja-Mahābhāva* in himself.[4]

Both Nityānanda and Narahari Sarkār of Śrīkhaṇḍa propagated Caitanya worship. Nityānanda did not try to attach to it any sexual significance. But Narahari Sarkār and Gadādhara Paṇḍita infused into the Caitanya movement an ineradicable sexual leaven. Some Vaiṣṇavas of the Śrīkhaṇḍa school, founded by Narahari Sarkār, even practised transvestism. Narahari Sarkār worshipped Caitanya as the *Nāgara* or clandestine lover of the women of Navadvīpa. Gadādhara Paṇḍita was regarded as the incarnation of Lakṣmī or Rādhā.[5] It seems that Narahari Sarkār, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Rāmānanda Rāya and probably Svarūpa Dāmodara formed a powerful group. Presumably this group established liaison with Sanātana and Rūpa through Raghunātha Dāsa. The group in Purī, led by Svarūpa Dāmodara, and the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana unitedly worked for the establishment of theological mastery over the other

1. CCM : Kālnā ed. Ch. 6, p. 101 : *Pitā mātā Guru Sakhā Bhavā Naya?| Kṛṣṇa-premāra Svabhāva Dāsyabhāva Se Karāya.||*
2. CCM : Kālnā ed. p. 295 : *Vrajalokera Konabhāva Laiyā Yei Bhaje| Bhāva-yogya Deha Pāyiyā Kṛṣṇa Pāya Vraje||*
3. Ibid : p. 297 : *Ataeva Gopībhāva Kari Angikāra| Rātridina Cinte Rādhā-kṛṣṇera Vihāra.||*
4. Ibid : p. 302 : *Tave Hāsi Tāre Prabhu Dekhāila Svarūpa| Rasarāja-Mahā-bhāva Dui Eka Rūpa.*
5. *Gauragaṇoddeśadīpikā*, verses 147-148.

groups in Bengal. Their theology, utterly unrelated to the austerity, puritanism and social liberalism of Caitanya, gained supremacy because of Caitanya's premature death and the failure of Advaita and Nityānanda to combine against them.

VI

Nityānanda is supposed to have fulfilled Caitanya's desire when he gave up his *Avadhūta* status, and married two daughters of a bureaucrat named Sūrydāsa Sarkhel.[1] A few days after his arrival in Navadvīpa Nityānanda was suddenly seized with a sort of ecstasy, broke his mace and *Kamaṇḍulu* (pot in which sacred water is preserved), and threw away the *Avadhūta* paraphernalia.[2] He might have married in accordance with Caitanya's request. But Caitanya was not responsible for Nityānanda's violent return to the household stage. The conservative elements opposed his marriage as he was supposed to have disregarded caste while he was an *Avadhūta*. He first married Vasudhā Devī, Sūryadāsa's eldest daughter. Then he demanded the hands of Jaṇhavā Devī, Vasudhā Devī's younger sister, as his dowry.[3]

Nityānanda built up a circle, the notable members of which were Abhirāma Rāmadāsa, Sundarānanda, Gadādhara Dāsa, Raghunātha Vaidya, Kṛṣṇānanda, Purandara Paṇḍita, Parameśvara Dāsa, Rāghava Paṇḍita, Kamalākara Piplāi, Uddhāraṇa Datta, and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita.[4] Nityānanda and his disciples had considerable influence in the villages of 24-parganas, Nadiā, Hooghly, Burdwan, Bīrbhūm and Dacca. Both Vṛndāvana Dāsa and Jayānanda mention some of the villages where Nityānanda spread Vaiṣṇavism. These were Kumārahatta, Cauhatta, Khaḍadaha, Pāṇihāti, Tāmbuli. Pātharāghātā (was it, by any chance, Pathuriāghātā in North Calcutta?), Hāthiyāgarh, Chatrabhoga, Varāhanagara, Kancḍāpāḍā, Nimdā

1. CBH : p. 374, 399 : *Gaurapadataraṅginī*, p. 265 : song of Dīna Kṛṣṇadāsa.
2. CBH : p. 152 : *Kathorātre Nityānanda Huṃkāra Kariyā| Nijadaṇḍa Kamaṇḍulu Phelilu Bhāngiyā||*
3. The legends of the marriage in Rabīndranāth Māiti's *Caitanyaparikara*, pp. 79-86.
4. The legends of these men are discussed in the next chapter.

(24 Parganās and Nadiā); Āknā, Māhesh, Saptagrāma, Kotarang (Hooghly); Buḍan (Jessore); Ambuā, Naihāti, Uddhāraṇpur (Burdwan); and Vaḍagāchi, Dogāchiyā, Bāṇīdīghi, Chātrā, and Hāthiyākāndā (Nadiā).[1]

Nityānanda adopted some novel and queer methods of spreading the faith among the common people. He first organised his own ritual consecration.[2] It invested him with unquestionable ecclesiastical authority. Jnānadāsa, the famous Vaiṣṇava poet of the Nityānanda circle, echoed Vṛndāvana Dāsa when he claimed that without worshipping Nityānanda's feet, no man could possibly worship Caitanya.[3] Nityānanda himself and his companions utilised *bhakti*-ecstasy to the fullest extent. He wore numerous ornaments, and danced with the full ornamental load.[4] His intimate companions indulged in eccentricities. Abhirāma Rāmadāsa, who had the strength of a giant, played the part of a Vṛndāvana cowboy equipped with a whip, which he liberally used on all fake Vaiṣṇavas. Gadādhara Dāsa played the part of Rādhā. Raghunātha Vaidya assumed the role of Balarāma's wife Revatī. Kṛṣṇadāsa and Parameśvara Dāsa became two other Vṛndāvana cowboys. Purandara Paṇḍita played the part of Angada, the monkey-prince of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and thus aped an ape. This queer group made a big noise. Their unnatural behaviour was regarded as the 'high delirium of *bhakti*'.[5]

Nityānanda requisitioned the services of three great *Kīrtana* singers of the time. They were Mādhava Ghoṣa, Govinda Ghoṣa and Vāsudeva Ghoṣa, three brothers of Navadvīpa, who were intimately acquainted with Caitanya.[6] Their attractive songs, and the

1. CBH : pp. 375-392 : Jayānanda, *Caitanyamangala*, pp. 223-224.
2. CBH : p. 376.
3. CBH : p. 57 : *Adideva Jaya Jaya Nityānanda Rāya.| Caitanyamahimā Sphūṛe Yānhāra Kṛpāya.||* Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Vaiṣṇava Padāvali* : *Ye Jana Gaurānga Bhajite Cāya| Se Jana Śaraṇa Lauka|Nitāicānder|Aruṇa Dukhānī Pāya||* p. 373.
4. CBH : p. 378 : *Dui Haste Suvarṇera Angada Valaya*, etc.
5. CBH : pp. 474, 375.
6. CBH : p. 375.

dervish dance of Nityānanda and his followers infused into the movement a new life after Caitanya's renunciation. These men were never opposed by the Muhammadan rulers. This is a fact which emphatically evidences their religious tolerance.

It was Nityānanda who set a glorious record of mass-contact by organising a big feast and festival in Pāṇihāti. In Vaiṣṇava chronicles this festival is called *Ciḍāmahotsava* or *Daṇḍamahotsava*. Its cost was borne by Raghunātha Dāsa, son of Govardhana, a *majumdār* of Saptagrāma, who was exceptionally affluent. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja heard the story of *Ciḍāmahotsava* probably from Raghunātha Dāsa himself. He gives a vivid description of the event.[1]

One day Nityānanda was seated under a tree on the bank of the Gangā, surrounded by his companions. Raghunātha Dāsa appeared before him and respectfully saluted him. Nityānanda greeted him affectionately and said: "O thief! Now that you have come here, I must punish you for your failure to maintain contact with myself for such a long time". Saying this Nityānanda affectionately embraced his neck and drew him near. Then he said: "You must organise a feast of *Ciḍā* (husk-free, parboiled rice), and curdled milk". Raghunātha gladly accepted the challenge. He ordered his servants to bring large quantities of *Ciḍā*, curd, milk, sweets, sugar and banana. The news of the feast spread far and wide. Innumerable people, including the Brāhmaṇas, came to Pānihāti. Huge mixing pots were brought. In these pots *Ciḍā* was mixed with thickly boiled milk, curd, and banana paste. Sugar, butter and camphor were added to the porridge. It was served to innumerable people. So great was the crowd that some people ate it standing in knee-deep water of the Gangā. Sixty men continuously served the food. Differences of caste were not observed during the feast.[2]

Nityānanda's violation of the caste rules was disliked by the

1. CCM : pp. 486-492. According to Amūlyadhan Rāyabhatta, the *Ciḍāmahotsava* was held in A.D. 1516-17. *Dvādaśa Gopāla*, p. 19.
2. Girijāśankar Raychaudhuri, *Śrī Caitanyadeva O Tānhār Pārṣadagaṇa*, pp. 91-92.

conservative elements. A Brāhmaṇa of Navadvīpa went to Purī, and reported to Caitanya those activities of Nityānanda which were disliked by the conservative elements. Caitanya is reported to have told the Brāhmaṇa that Nityānanda had the extra-ordinary right to behave as he pleased because he was an extra-ordinary man.[1] But Jayānanda informs us that Caitanya expressed his disapproval of Nityānanda's exhibitionism and pomposity. Nityānanda told Caitanya that asceticism and self-denial (*Kāthinya*) could not be regarded as the spirit of the contemporary age.[2]

Nityānanda lived in Pānihāti for three months. The *Gopāla* system presumably evolved during this period. From Pānihāti Nityānanda went to Khaḍadaha, Navadvīpa, and Saptagrāma. In Saptagrāma he converted Uddhāraṇa Datta, a leading merchant of the Suvarṇavaṇik caste. Uddharāṇa's conversion led to the conversion of the entire Vaṇik community of Saptagrāma, where Nityānanda used *Kīrtana* as an effective mass medium.[3] Nityānanda also converted some Brāhmaṇa brigands of Navadvīpa by performing miracles.[4]

After his marriage Nityānanda permanently settled in Khaḍadaha. Ekcākā in Bīrbhūm, where he was born, became a deserted village. Later his son Vīrabhadra is said to have installed in the village a Viṣṇu image called Bankima Rāya.[5] Nityānanda flagrantly violated Brāhmaṇical convention by settling the marriage of his daughter Gangā Devī with a Vārendra Brāhmaṇa named Mādhavācārya, who was his disciple.[6]

1. CBH : pp. 392-393.
2. *Caitanyamangala*, Uttarakhaṇḍa, p. 232 : Caitanya said : "*Mahotsave Māgi Jāya Nāce Saṃkīrtane/ Hena Mukti* (alternative reading *Yukti*) *Tumāre Dilek Kona Jane*"./ Nityānanda said : "*Kāthinyakīrtana Kaliyuga Dharma Nahe*".
3. CBH : p. 382.
4. CBH : pp. 384-390.
5. BRK : pp. 444-452 : Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Bāṅglār Kīrtan O Kīrtaniyā*, p. 179. Towards the end of the nineteenth century a Vaiṣṇava ascetic named Congādharī Bābāji (died, 1913) tried to transform Ekcākā into a holy place. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, II, pp. 96-98.
6. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 24, pp. 241-252.

According to a recent calculation, based on certain traditional accounts, Nityānanda was born on January 12, 1473 and died in 1545 or thereabouts.[1]

VII

Dimock holds Nityānanda responsible for "the creation of the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā school". He believes in Premadāsa's account of Nityānanda's conversion of two thousand and five hundred Buddhist monks and nuns, which is given in *Ānandabhairava*. Dimock writes: "There is reliable evidence even apart from this story that Nityānanda was crucial in the joining of the Vaiṣṇava and Sahajiyā streams; this, however, because he was probably a Tāntrika, and certainly a powerful leader, not only because he opened the floodgates to the lower social orders".[2]

There are several objections to this theory.

Firstly, later Vaiṣṇava tradition holds Nityānanda's son Vīrabhadra primarily responsible for the conversion of the Buddhist monks and nuns.[3] Secondly, *Ānandabhairava* was written two-hundred years after Nityānanda's death. Its author might not have been aware of the history of the conversion of the Buddhists. Thirdly, some Sahajiyā writers found it expedient to depict Caitanya, the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana (including Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja), and Mīrā Bāi as worshippers of the Sahajiyā school. Premadāsa presumably added to the list the name of Nityānanda. Fourthly, had Nityānanda remained a Tāntrika even after his association with the Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa, he would not have been rejected and humiliated by Rāmacandra, a Tāntrika landlord of Benāpol, Jessore.[4] Nityānanda was the promoter of *Sakhyabhāva* or the friendly mood,

1. Sukhamaya Mukhopādhyāya, *Madhyayuger Bānglā Sāhityer Tathya O Kālakrama*, pp. 49-50.
2. *The Place of the Hidden Moon*, pp. 51-52.
3. *Nityānandaprabhur Vaṁśavistāra*, pp. 60-72. The tradition of Vīrabhadra's conversion of the Buddhists was recorded in the late nineteenth century Vaiṣṇava journal *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*: 1885, p. 118; 1892-93: p. 64, p. 192, Also, 1885, p. 141. See also *Vaṃśīśikṣā*, pp. 216-217.
4. CCM: *Antyalīlā*, Ch. 3, pp. 702 f. (Kālnā ed.)

in which the principle of 'unlibidinous eroticism' had no place. It would have been impossible for Nityānanda to adjust his friendly mood with the sexual *yoga* of the Sahajiyās. Nityānanda's past is admittedly obscure. Once he might have been a worshipper of Śiva and Śakti. But in Navadvīpa he certainly became a follower of Caitanya, to whose tenets he adhered as long as he lived.

VIII

Rabīndranāth Māiti's view of the activities of Nityānanda is highly critical. He has serious doubts about Nityānanda's authority to spread Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal when there were, to use his words, 'Advaita Prabhu' and other old Vaiṣṇavas in Bengal who were highly competent to do the same.[1] Māiti first expressess his disbelief in the story of Nityānanda's marriage in conformity to Caitanya's wish. But when he finds that the story is told by Vṛndāvana Dāsa, he immediately revises his earlier opinion and says that the story might, after all, be true.[2] He finds no reason behind Nityānanda's use of ornaments.[3] He is of opinion that the emergence of the *Gopālas* indicated a situation which was not conducive to the evolution of the intellectual approach.[4] Māiti ultimately comes to the conclusion that Caitanya did not express any desire to see Nityānanda married.[5] Lastly he opines that none of the disciples (mentioned in *Caitanyacaritāmṛta*) who followed Nityānanda was really 'renowned'.[6] One can only say that Māiti's evaluation of the career and activities of Nityānanda is both wrong and tendentious. He wants to establish Advaita's superiority to Nityānanda. He finds it very difficult to express any positive opinion with regard to Nityānanda's marriage.

It has already been pointed out that, according to Kṛṣṇadāsa

1. Rabīndranāth Māiti, *Caitanyaparikara*, pp. 73-74.
2. Ibid, p. 87.
3. Ibid. pp. 77-78.
4. Ibid. pp. 103-104.
5. Ibid. p. 106.
6. Ibid. p. 106.

Kavirāja, Caitanya requested both Advaita and Nityānanda to spread the faith in Bengal. Caitanya even mentioned the names of the principal assistants of Nityānanda.[1] Māiti's theory that only Nityānanda was commissioned by Caitanya to spread the faith in Bengal is, therefore, baseless.

As for Nityānanda's marriage, the following points should be noted. Advaita had two wives and six sons. Caitanya never asked him to renounce the world. Caitanya himself had married twice, and had renounced the world. But even after renouncing the world he lived in Purī, which was a notable mediaeval city and pilgrim centre. He had also numerous social connections. He was looked after by servants and Svarūpa Dāmodara, who was his personal secretary in the modern sense of the term. Later Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a protégé of the gosvāmins of Vṛndavāna, married twice, and yet never looked disreputable for his bigamy. Rāmānanda Rāya 'kept' two young temple-girls or *Devadāsis*, whom he even bathed; Caitanya discussed philosophy with him. But 'chhota' (junior) Haridāsa, an ascetic, was ostracized by Caitanya when he brought some fine rice from an old woman. Caitanya obviously respected the conventions laid down respectively for householders like Rāmānanda and ascetics like Haridāsa junior.[2] In fact there were two groups among the followers of Caitanya. The first group consisted of ascetics who had to conform to the rules of asceticism. The bigger group consisted of the householders.[3] Caitanya never said that his faith could be followed only by the ascetics. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya suggests that Nityānanda set a noble example of selfless dedication to the cause when he reverted back to the householding stage, after finally relinquishing his *Avadhūta* rights, discretions and privileges.[4] Vṛndāvana Dāsa writes that Nityānanda was not particularly elated when Caitanya asked him to preach the faith as a householder.[5]

1. CCM : p. 280 : *Ācāryere Ājnā Dilā Kariyā Samāna*, etc.
2. CCM : pp, 720-23 (Kālnā ed.)
3. This point is stressed in *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 16, p. 220.
4. *Bānglār Kīrtan O Kīrtaniyā*, p. 179.
5. CBH : p. 399.

Nityānanda's bigamy in an age of polygamy was certainly no disqualification.

Nityānanda's ornaments and pomposity have attracted Māiti's wrath and ridicule.[1] But he should have noted that Caitanya had not laid down any definite rule for the preachers of the faith. The ethical rules, said to have been formulated by Caitanya, were to be followed, at least in principle, by all Vaiṣṇavas. But a close examination of these rules would make it clear that many of them could not possibly be observed by the householders. These were essentially rules formulated for the Vaiṣṇava ascetics who had renounced the world.[2] It would, therefore, be reasonable to regard Nityānanda's pomposity and ornaments as purely personal matters arising out of some eccentricity inherent in his character. Māity has apparently failed to grasp the significance of Nityānanda's *Sakhyabhāva* or the 'friendly mood'. He never tries to understand the fact that Nityānanda and Advaita had eschewed the 'erotic mood'. Advaita might have disliked Nityānanda's egalitarianism. But at least insofar as he had no marked preference for the erotic sentiment, he had really no disagreement on basic issues. Whether Advaita regarded Nityānanda as a glutton or not is of little moment.[3]

The historical importance of Nityānanda's conversion of the Suvarṇavaṇik merchants of Saptagrāma and the organisation of the *Gopāla*s can hardly be overestimated. Some of the *Gopālas* like Rāmadāsa Abhirāma, Dhananjaya Paṇḍita, and Kamalākara Piplāi were very influential and popular leaders of the Caitanya movement. Vṛndāvana Dāsa, Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa, Jayānanda and Nityānanda Dāsa, great chroniclers of the Caitanya movement, were very deeply influenced by Nityānanda's ideals. It is interesting to note that the attitude of these chroniclers was non-sectarian and liberal. Vṛndāvana

1. *Caitanyaparikara*, p. 78.
2. CCM, *Antyalīlā*, pp. 498-499 : these rules were formulated for the *Vairāgī* or Vaiṣṇavas who had renounced the world.
3. Māiti, *Caitanyaparikara*, pp. 74, 92, 93-94, 96-97, 98, 102. Māiti often refers to what he considers Nityānanda's gluttony, which was ridiculed (in lovers' quarrels) by Advaita.

Dāsa is always full of adoration for Advaita. Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa, too, describes Mādhavendra Purī and Advaita as the real architects of the Caitanya movement. Jayānanda has respect for all leaders of the movement, but his attitude is rather conservative. Nityānanda Dāsa, author of *Premavilāsa*, makes ample amends for Vṛndāvana Dāsa's studied indifference to Narahari Sarkār. The Nityānanda circle produced at least two great *Padāvalī* poets. They were Jṇānadāsa and Balarāma Dāsa. Most of the Vaiṣṇava poets who wrote their songs either from the parental or from the friendly angle belonged to Nityānanda's circle. Beautiful songs on lovely toddlers (Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya) were composed by them.

CHAPTER VIII

THE *GOPĀLAS*

I

Nityānanda's *Sakhyabhāva* worship was popularised in different parts of West Bengal by some of his disciples who were known as *Gopālas* or Cowherds. Their activities and genealogies were first studied by Amūlyadhan Rāyabhatta whose book on the subject, titled *Dvādaśa Gopāla* (*Twelve Gopālas*), was based on extensive field work.

In all probability the *Gopālas* were first organised by Nityānanda himself during the *Ciḍāmahotsava* in Pānihāti. Most of the men who were known as *Gopālas* were present in the Pānihāti festival. The *Gopālas* constituted the earliest Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava organization in Bengal.[1]

In verses 126 to 135 of the *Gauraganoddeśadīpikā* Karṇapūra stated the mythical identity of each of the *Gopālas*. They were regarded as the cowherd-friends of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma in Vṛndāvana, reborn to be attached to Nityānanda, the incarnation of Balarāma.

	Gopāla	*Vṛndāvana Identity*
1.	Abhirāma	Śrīdāma
2.	Sundara Thākura	Sudāma
3.	Dhananjaya	Vasudāma
4.	Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita	Suvala
5.	Kamalākara Piplāi	Mahāvala
6.	Uddhāraṇa Datta	Suvāhu
7.	Maheśa Paṇḍita	Mahāvāhu
8.	Puruṣottama	Stokakṛṣṇa
9.	Parameśvara Dāsa	Arjuna
10.	Puruṣottama Nāgara	Dāma
11.	Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa	Lavanga
12.	Śrīdhara	Kusumāsava
13.	Halāyudha Thākura	Pravala
14.	Rudra Paṇḍita	Varathupa
15.	Kumudānanda Paṇḍita	Gandharbha

1. Amūlyadhan Rāyabhatta, *Dvādaśa Gopāla*, pp. 19-24.

Karṇapura refers to these men as '*Vrajabhaktas*'.[1]

Later chroniclers and hagiologists erased an old name and inserted a new one. They also whimsically altered the sequence found in the GGD list. Such omissions, additions and alterations are found in *Anantasaṃhitā*, *Śrīcaitanyasaṃgitā*, Abhirāma Dāsa's *Pātaparyatana*, *Vaiṣṇavavandanā*, old *Panjikā* or Ephemeris, *Vaiṣṇavācāradarpaṇa*, etc.[2]

It appears that the last four *Gopālas* mentioned in Karṇapūra's list, were never stable. Their *Śrīpāta* or headquarters was never stable. Their names. too, were altered or incorrectly spelt by careless or ignorant hagiologists. The other *Gopālas* who had presumably sound bases and hundreds of disciples were not seriously affected by the unaccountable ups and downs of Vaiṣṇava tradition. Some examples of the additions and omissions (which are not given in Rāyabhatta's work) are stated below.

A. In *Vaṃśīśikṣā* Premadāsa mentions only eleven *Gopālas*. In this work Śrīdhara, who was a dear friend of Caitanya, is replaced by Mukunda Dāsa (Datta). Kamalākara Piplāi is placed in the tenth position.[3]

B. In *Dvādaśa Pāta* twelve *Gopālas* are mentioned, of whom four are newcomers. They are Kaśīśvara Gosvāmin of Pānihāti, Maheśvara Thākura of Sardāngā (probably identifiable with the seventh man in Karṇapūra's list), Madhu Paṇḍita of Bhāngāhāt, and Vṛndāvana Dāsa, author of CBH, with his *Śrīpāta* in Kumārahatta. According to this work each of these *Gopālas* was contemplated as a boy of twelve, irrespective of his actual age.[4]

C. In the *Svarūpavarṇana* of Kṛṣṇadāsa, twelve *Gopālas* are mentioned of whom at least two are new men. They are Uddhava Datta and Banamālī Ojhā (spelt, *Aghā*).[5]

In all probability there were at first fifteen *Gopālas*. But the last three or four *Gopālas* never remained stable. So the number

1. GGD, verses 14, 125.
2. Rāyabhatta, op. cit. pp. 6-12.
3. *Vaṃśīśikṣā*, pp. 65-68.
4. *Dvādaśa Pāta* in Śivaratan Mitra's *Types of Early Bengali Prose*, pp. 174-176.
5. *Svarupavarṇana* in Pancānana Maṇḍala's *Punthi Paricaya*, Vol. 3, pp. 310-315.

of *Gopālas* came down to the irreducible minimum of twelve. Even then an old name was dropped, and a new name, or the name of an up-and-coming Vaiṣṇava of the Nityānanda 'branch' or 'family' was inserted. The problem of the new claimants to lucrative *Gopāla-hood* was ultimately solved by the institution of *Upagapālahood*. The *Upagopāla* or the lesser *Gopāla* was institutionalised probably towards the end of the sixteenth century. They are mentioned in GGD, but their number is not mentioned therein.[1] Some of the unimportant *Gopālas* were later recognised as *Upagopālas*. After the institution of the *Upagopāla* system, the descendants of the Vaiṣnavas, recognised as *Upagopālas*, could claim a fair share of the offerings of the worshippers of Nityānanda. Ultimately the number of such *Upagopālas* rose to twelve. Afterwards no further addition or alteration was possible. The *Upagopālas* are found to be listed in Navadvīpacandra Gosvāmin's *Vaiṣṇavācāradarpaṇa*.[2] The only follower of Nityānanda who was not mentioned in the final lists was Kumudānanda Paṇḍita. His disappearance cannot be explained. He was probably an ascetic without any follower or heir. The following lists of the *Gopālas* and the *Upagopālas* were final:

Gopālas

Number	Name	*Śrīpāta*	District
1.	Abhirāma	Khānākul-Kṛṣṇanagar	Hooghly
2.	Sundarānanda Thākur	Maheshpur	Jessore
3.	Dhananjaya Paṇḍita	Śītalagrām	Burdwan
4.	Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita	Ambikā-Kālnā	Burdwan
5.	Kamalākar Piplāi	Māhesh	Hooghly
6.	Uddhāraṇa Datta	Saptagrāma	Hooghly
7.	Maheśa Paṇḍita	Pālpārā	Nadiā
8.	Puruṣottama Dāsa	Chāndure	Nadiā
9.	Parameśvara Dāsa	Tarā Ātpur	Hooghly
10.	Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa	Ākāibāt	Burdwan
11.	Śrīdhara	Navadvīpa	Nadiā
12.	Halāyudha Thākura[3]	Rāmacandrapur	Nadiā

1. GGD, Verse, 14; line-2.
2. *Vaiṣṇavācāradarpaṇa*, pp. 333-334. The list is based upon unverifiable tradition.
3. Haridāsa Dāsa includes Puruṣottama Nāgara as an additional *Gopāla*. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I. p. 115.

Upagopālas

Number	Name	*Śrīpāta*	District
1.	Halāyudha Thākura[1]	Rāmacandrapur	Nadiā
2.	Rudra Paṇḍita	Ballabhpur	Hooghly
3.	Mukunda	Navadvīpa	Nadiā
4.	Kāśiśvara	Ballabhpur	Hooghly
5.	Banamālī Ojhā	Kulyāpārā	Nadiā
6.	Śrīmanta	Rukunpur	Murshidābād
7.	Murāri Māhāti[2]	Vaṃśītotā	Purī
8.	Gangādāsa	Naihāti	24 Parganas
9.	Gopāla Thākur	Gaurāngapur	Hooghly
10.	Śivāi[3]	Belun	Burdwan
11.	Nandāi[4]	Śāligrām	Nadiā
12.	Viṣṇāi[5]	Jhāmatpur	Burdwan

II

Abhirāma Rāmadāsa of Khānākul-Kṛṣṇanagar. Hooghly, was perhaps the most important *Gopāla*. He belonged to the 'branch' of Caitanya, who asked him to work as Nityānanda's assistant. Abhirāma Rāmadāsa had the physical strength of a giant. Once, in *bhakti* ecstasy, he lifted up a piece of heavy wood, which could be lifted by the combined strength of a group of sixteen men, and played the flute on it.[6] His wife Mālinī was perhaps a Muha-

1. If Puruṣottama Nāgara is regarded as a *Gopāla*, Halāyudha Thākura must have his place among the *Upagopālas*. But he is given the first place among them. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, p. 92.
2. Murāri Māhāti was the brother of Śikhī Māhāti, a prominent female disciple of Caitanya in Purī.
3. Śivāi, personal servant of Caitanya, was important enough to earn *Upagopālahood*.
4. Nandāi was also a servant of Caitanya in Purī. Both Śivāi and Nandāi, being servants, belonged to the branch of Nityānanda, who had the 'servile mood' or *Dāsyabhāva*. CCM. Kālnā ed. p. 127 : *Sivāi, Nandāi, Avadhūta, Paramānanda*, etc.
5. Viṣṇāi must be Viṣṇāi Hāzrā of the Nityānanda branch. CCM : Kālnā ed. p. 137.
6. CCM : Kālnā ed. p. 132 : *Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Sakhyapremarāśi| Ṣola Sangera Kāṣṭha Tuli Ye Karila Bānśī.||* The number of men who could possibly lift up the wood varied. According to GGD, it was 32 : GGD, p. 38, verse 126. It was 100 in BRK, Ch. 4, p. 79, verse 123. Perhaps the number increased with the growing importance of Abhirāma in the Caitanya movement.

mmadan's daughter.[1] According to Rāyabhatta Abhirāma was born in 1478 A.D.[2] He and his disciples were active in Hooghly, Howrah, 24 Parganas, Burdwan, Midnapur and Bankura districts of West Bengal. Some of them even established their headquarters in Nadiā and Māldā. Abhirāma possibly converted the fishermen of Khānākul-Kṛṣṇanagar.[3]

According to Sukumar Sen, the influence of Abhirāma was so great in middle *Rāḍa* (district of Hooghly, and eastern parts of Burdwan, adjacent to Hooghly) that the other Vaiṣṇava points of view could not gain much ground in that area.[4]

Many legends about Abhirāma were once popular. According to one legend Abhirāma was so powerful in the spiritual sense that if he ever saluted a *Śāligrāma* stone, it at once broke up into hundreds of pieces. According to another interesting legend he killed no less than seven sons of Nityānanda simply by touching their feet in respectful salutation. Only Vīrabhadra could tolerate his terrible salute. Abhirāma had a whip which was known as *Jaya-mangalā*. Any man, lucky enough to be whipped thrice by Abhirāma, became a devout Vaiṣṇava. Even Śrīnivāsa Ācārya was thus whipped by Abhirāma, and was regarded as his 'half' disciple.[5] Twenty-four principal disciples of Abhirāma are mentioned in a work titled *Abhiramaśākhānirṇaya*. The majority of them were active in the villages of Hooghly, Nadiā, Burdwan and Howrah.[6]

III

Sundarānanda Thākur, a Brāhmaṇa ascetic, founded his *Śrīpāta* in Maheshpur, Jessore. Towards the beginning of the nineteenth

1. *Abhirāmalīlāmṛta*, p. 12. She is described as a Brāhmaṇa's daughter in BRK, p. 79, verses 107-108. She was a *Mālākār* woman according to *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Hooghly*, 1972, p. 212.
2. Rāyabhatta, op. cit., p. 75.
3. Rāyabhatta, op. cit , pp. 27-28.
4. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, I, Part II, p. 34.
5. The legend of Abhirāma's use of whip on Śrīnivāsa is given in *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 5, pp. 47-48.
6. ' *'Abhirāma Gosvāmir Śākhāniraṇaya*" quoted by Rāyabhatta, op. cit., pp. 40-43.

century the images of Rādhāramaṇa and Rādhāvallabha, installed by him, were taken away to Murshidābad (Saidābād). The Vaiṣṇava landlords of Maheshpur managed the *Śrīpata* and the lands attached it.

Some disciples of Sundarānanda later settled in Mangaldihi village in Bīrbhūm. One of them became the preceptor of *Parṇi-gopāla* or *Pānuāgopāla*, a local Brāhmaṇa, who earned his livelihood by selling betel leaves. Pānuāgopāla made Mangaldihi a famous centre of Vaiṣṇava worship in Bīrbhūm. He was a close friend of a Muhammadan Fakir named Shāh Ābdullā, who lived in the same locality. Pānuāgopāla ungrudgingly accepted the gifts offered by the local Muhammadans for Kṛṣṇa worship. He was patronised by the Hindu and Muhammadan landlords.[1]

The Vaiṣṇavas of Mangaldihi, descendants of the disciples of Sundarānanda Thākur, worshipped Kṛṣṇa from the 'friendly' point of view, and thus continued the *Gopāla* tradition. The main Vaiṣṇava festivals of Mangaldihi were the *Goṣthayātrā* and the *Rāsayātrā*. A great poet and theologian of the Mangaldihi centre was Nayanānanda who flourished in the eighteenth century. He wrote two theological works, entitled, respectively, *Śrīkṛṣṇabhakti-rasakadamva* (Śaka 1652, A.D. 1730), and *Preyobhaktirasārṇava* (Śaka 1653, A.D. 1730).[2] Another theologian of Mangaldihi was Jagadānanda, author of *Śyāmacandrodaya*. Dwārakānātha Thākura of Mangaldihi wrote *Govindavallabhanātakaṃ* on the theme of the celebration of the *Goṣthāṣtamī* festival in Vṛndāvana.

IV

Dhananjaya Paṇḍita hailed from Chittagong. He was a *Rāḍī* Brahmaṇa and very rich. He first met Nityananda in Navadvīpa. He renounced the world and contributed his wealth to the promo-

1. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Gauḍavanga Saṃskṛti*, pp. 32-33, 39.
2. These works have been published by Haridāsa Dāsa. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, p. 97.

tion of the Vaiṣṇava cause.[1] Dhananjaya and his brother Sanjaya were very active in Jalandī village in Bīrbhūm. The two brothers converted a good number of people belonging to the Āguri caste.[2] Dhananjaya and his brother Sanjaya had considerable influence in such villages of Bīrbhūm as Muluk and Paikor. Later the disciples of Ramkānāi Thākur, a Brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇava of the Nityānanda school, developed Muluk as an important centre of Kṛṣṇa worship from the 'friendly' point of view. They promoted Śakta-Vaiṣṇava syncretism. The principal deity in Muluk is Kṛṣṇa, the divine 'cowherd'. A big Vaiṣṇava fair is held in the village on the occasion of the *Goṣthayātrā*. In Muluk the worship of the Goddess *Aparājitā* (Durga) is a part of the Vaiṣṇava worship of Gaurānga and Kṛṣṇa [3]

Śrīkhaṇḍa, centre of *Gauranāgaravāda*, was a part of Bīrbhūm even towards the end of the nineteenth century. But it seems that in Bīrbhūm the tradition of 'friendly love', pursued by Nityānanda and the *Gopālas*, was much stronger than the *Gauranāgaravāda* doctrine. The main Vaiṣṇava centres of Bīrbhūm probably did not conform to the rituals laid down in *Haribhaktivilāsa*.

V

Ambikā-Kālnā in Burdwan was the *Śrīpāta* of Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, who was an uncle of Jāṇhavā Devī, Nityānanda's wife. Kālnā is still one of the big centres of rice trade in West Bengal. Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, no doubt, converted a good number of the rice merchants, and possibly established contact with the rice traders of East Bengal. He installed the images of Caitanya and Nityananda and initiated their worship. He probably wrote a biography of Caitanya.[4] He went to Vṛndāvana where he died.[5]

1. *Gaurapadataranginī*, p. 100; GVA, II, p. 1966; Rāyabhatta, op. cit., pp. 50-56.
2. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, op. cit., p. 36.
3. *Gauḍavangasaṃskṛti*, pp. 36-41.
4. It is referred to in *Caitanyamangaia* of Jayānanda: *Ādikhaṇḍa*,-1, p. 4, verse 67.
5. Rāyabhatta, op. cit., p. 76. Gaurīdāsa died in 1559.

Gaurīdāsa's disciple Hṛdayacaitanya originally belonged to the school of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Later he came to Kālnā and was initiated by Gaurīdāsa.[1] Hṛdayacaitanya initiated Śyāmānanda, the celebrated Vaiṣṇava missionary of Midnāpur.

Like the majority of the Gopālas, Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita was a married householder. He and his friend Gadādhara were the chief representatives of the Nityānanda 'branch' in Burdwan. Their influence was so great that Śrīnivāsa Ācārya had to take the followers of the Nityānanda faith into his confidence before he could adopt the programe of spreading the Vṛndāvana viewpoint in Burdwan and the neighbouring districts. The nature of the relation, if any, between the *Śrīpāta* of Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita and the Śrīkhaṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas is not known.[2]

VI

Kamalākara Piplāi, a rich householder, founded his *Śrīpāta* in Māhesh, near Śerampur, Hooghly. His descendants were able to secure for the *Śrīpāta* the patronage of Wālis Khān, Nawāb of Dacca, who is said to have donated to it, in 1651 or thereabouts, no less than 1165 *bighas* of land. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century the Māhesh centre was patronised by Nayancānd Mallik, a rich Suvarṇavaṇik landlord of Calcutta. He built the Māhesh temple in about 1855-1856. Kṛṣṇarām Basu of Bāghbāzār, Calcutta, a rich Kāyastha landlord, and a *dewān*, bore the expenses of the construction of the *Ratha* or chariot, which is used during the famous *Rathayātrā* festival of Māhesh. This *Ratha* is deemed to be second in importance to that of Purī.

Either Kamalākara Piplāi or his sons became so much powerful that the *Śrīpāta* of Rudra Paṇḍita in the neighbouring village of

1. Hṛdayayacaitanya was probably Gaurīdāsa's relative by marriage. Māiti, *Caitanyaparikara*, pp. 422-434.
2. Towards the end of the 19th century Kālnā became an important Vaiṣṇava centre, which was controlled by Bhagavāndās Bābāji. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, pp. 180-194.

Vallabhpur could not prosper because of their rivalry. L.S.S.O'Malley records the legend of a quarrel between Rudra Paṇḍita and Nityānanda's son Vīrabhadra over the question of the ownership of the idols of Śyāmasundara, Rādhāvallabha and Nandadulāla.[1] Later the Vallabhpur Vaiṣṇavas made a compromise with the Vaiṣṇavas of Māhesh. During the *Rathayātrā* festival the chariot bearing the image of Jagannātha is carried or drawn towards the 'aunt's house' in Vallabhpur.

VII

Uddhāraṇa Datta, a rich Suvarṇavaṇik merchant, founded a *Śrīpāta* in Saptagrāma.[2] This *Śrīpāta* is still maintained by the Suvarṇavaṇik Vaiṣṇavas of Magrā and Hooghly. Though Uddhāraṇa belonged to the caste of the goldsmiths, he was permitted by Nityānanda to cook his meals.[3] According to one account, Uddhāraṇa went to Vrndāvana with Jāṇhavā Devī as her guide.[4]

In about 1507 a devastating famine broke out in Hooghly. Uddhāraṇa operated a big relief centre in Saptagrāma, and converted thousands of poor, starving people. According to a legend, Uddhāraṇa's relief centre and cook-house were set up on a vast scale which covered thirty *bighās* of land in Ādisaptagrāma.[5]

Nityānanda's conversion of Uddhāraṇa Datta was preceded by that of Hirayṇa and Govardhana, leading Suvarṇavaṇik landlords of Saptagrāma, by Sanātana Miśra, Caitanya's father-in-law. Govardhana was the father of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin. These rich men had some link with Advaita through their family priest Balarāma Ācārya, who was Advaita's disciple.

1. L.S.S.O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 24 Parganas 1914, pp. 247-48.
2. Uddhāraṇa was probably converted in 1516 or thereabouts. GVA, II, p. 1970.
3. *Nityānandaprabhur Vaṃśavistāra*, p. 8; *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, pp. 10-11.
4. *Muralīvilāsa*, ch. 14, p. 262.
5. GVA, II, pp. 1970-71. It is a small station on the Calcutta-Delhi main line. It is adjacent to Bandel aud Magrā.

The spread of the *Bhakti* cult in South-Eastern *Rāḍa* country was greatly facilitated by the conversion of the Suvarṇavaṇik, Gandhavaṇik, and the Navaśākha castes. Vaiṣṇavism was very attractive to these trading castes.[1]

VIII

The next important *Gopāla* was Maheśa Paṇḍita of Pālpārā in the district of Nadia. The *Śrīpāta* was first set up in Masīpur village which was eroded by the Ganges. In about 1850 the images of Masīpur were transported to Pālpārā. But the Pālpārā *Śrīpāta* is no longer important.[2]

Maheśa Paṇḍita, a *Rāḍī* Brāhmaṇa, came to West Bengal from Sylhet. He was acquainted with Caitanya in Navadvīpa. Maheśa and his brother Jagadīśa ran a Sanskrit *tola* or school in Navadvīpa. Later Jagadīśa founded his own *Śrīpāta* in *Jaśaḍā* village in Nadiā.[3] Maheśa Paṇḍita was a householder. Probably he spread Vaiṣṇavism among the low-caste peasants and milk-traders or *goālās* of the Sadgopa caste. He was acquainted with Narottama Datta.[4]

IX

Puruṣottama Dāsa Thākura, a Vaiṣṇava of the Vaidya caste, and son of Sadāśiva Kavirāja, an important *Mahānta*, founded his *Śrīpāta* in Sukhsāgar, Nadiā.[5] To him is ascribed the authorship of *Śrī Śrī Harībhaktitattvasārasaṃgraha*.[6] Puruṣottama's disciple was Brāhmaṇa Daivakīnandana, author of *Vaiṣṇavavandanā* and *Vaiṣṇavābhidhāna*. The non-sectarian attitude of the Nityānanda

1. *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Hooghly*, 1972 ed. 211-12.
2. Rāyabhatta, op. cit., p. 112.
3. Jānakīnāth Pāl, *Nityānandacaritra*, p. 300; Kumudnāth Mallik, *Nadiā Kāhinī*, p. 346.
4. BRK, VIII, p. 369, verse 220.
5. Biographical sketch of Puruṣottamadāsa Thākur in *Caitanyacandrodaye Viśiṣta Tārakātraya*, by Sundarānanda Vidyāvinod, pp. 51-84.
6. The MS of this work was discovered in 1953 in the Govinda Temple library of Jaipur, Rajasthan, by Haridasa Dasa. Vidyāvinod, op. cit., pp. 62-78.

school is fully manifest in *Vaiṣṇavavandanā* in which proper respect has been shown for all important Vaiṣṇavas regardless of sectarian affiliation or caste.

The Sukhsāgar *Śrīpāta* exsisted even in 1842, after which it was eroded by the Ganges. The idol of the *Śrīpāta* was taken away to Chāndure village.[1]

Puruṣottama's son Kānāi Thākur, alias Śiśu (child) Kṛṣṇadāsa was brought up by Jāṇhavā Devī after his mother's death. Kānāi Thākur first went to Jessore and established his *Srīpāta* in Bodhkhānā village. Later he migrated to Garbhetā in Midnāpur where he developed a powerful Vaiṣṇava centre presumably with the help of two local leaders, Śyāmānanda (who was a disciple of Hṛdayacaitanya of Kālnā), and Śyāmānanda's disciple Rasikānanda. In Garbhetā Śiśu Kṛṣṇadāsa organised a *Ciḍāmohotsava*.[2]

X

The next *Gopāla* was Parameśvara Dāsa of Tarā Ātpur. In *Muralīvilāsa* he is described as an attendant of Vīrabhadra and Jāṇhavā Devī.[3] He was one of the *Gopālas* who attended the Kheturi festival. Most of his disciples belonged to the caste of weavers. He was a celibate monk and acquainted with both Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Narottama Datta.[4]

XI

The identity of *Gopāla* Kālākṛṣṇadāsa is a subject of controversy.[5] It is assumed that he was a *Kulīna* Brāhmaṇa who visited

1. Vidyāvinod, op. cit., p. 83.
2. Vidyāvinod, op. cit., pp. 85-129. It is interesting to note that Puruṣottama's father Sadāśiva Kaviraja was a *manjarī* worshipper. He composed 14 verses on Caitanya which were known as *Śrī Śrī Śacīnandanavilakṣaṇacaturdaśakaṃ*. Vidyāvinod, op. cit., pp. 26-50.
3. *Muralīvilāsa*, pp. 153-54.
4. Rayābhatta, op. cit., pp. 138-148.
5. The controversy is explained by Rabīndranāth Māiti, *Caitanyaparikara*, pp. 69-71.

the Deccan as a personal attendant of Caitanya. At a place named Bhattamārī he fell a victim to the wiles of some women who belonged to the local Śākta sect. Caitanya himself rescued him from their clutches and never believed him afterwards. Returning to Purī, Caitanya ordered his expulsion. But Nityānanda intervened, and sent him to Bengal.

There is, however, another view of Kālākṛṣṇadāsa. A man expelled by Caitanya could not hope to become a *Gopāla*. There were four other Kṛṣṇadāsas associated with Nityānanda, any of whom might be a *Gopāla*.[1] Moreover, there were different traditions of the *Śrīpata* of Kālākṛṣṇadāsa. According to *Abhirāmalīlāmṛta* his *Śrīpata* was located in Baḍagāchi, Nadiā.[2] At Ākāihāt, near Kātwā, Burdwan, there was the *Srīpāta* of another Kṛṣṇadāsa, who had no such sobriquet as *Kālā*, but who attended the Kheturi festival.[3]

Since both Kavi Karṇapūra and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja mention Kālākṛṣṇadāsa, it would be reasonable to suppose that there was really a Kālākṛṣṇadāsa who was a *Gopāla*.[4] He might have set up his *Śrīpāta* in Ākāihāt or elsewhere. The descendants of Kālākṛṣṇadāsa live in the Sonātalā village of Pābnā. Rāyabhatta found only the ruins of an old *Śrīpāta* in Ākāihāt.[5]

XII

Śrīdhara was the only *Gopāla* who was regarded as a friend of Caitanya in Navadvīpa. Though he was a Brāhmaṇa he earned his living by selling vegetables and *kholā* or the thin bark of banana trees, which is used for ritualistic purposes. Caitanya formed with

1. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, pp. 29, 31, 32, 33.
2. Rāyabhatta, op. cit. pp. 138-31.
3. BRK, p. 419, verse 409. Presumably this Kṛṣṇadāsa and Kālākṛṣṇadāsa were the same man.
4. GGD, p. 39, verse 132; CCM : Kālnā ed. *Madhyalīlā*, Ch. 9, p. 315, Ch, 10, p. 327.
5. Rāyabhatta, op. cit., p. 149, GVA, II, pp. 1977-78.

him a 'joking' relationship.[1] Very possibly Caitanya himself conferred on him the *Gopāla* status.

XIII

There is considerable confusion about the twelfth *Gopāla*. According to one school, he was Halāyudha Thākura of Rāmcandrapur, Nadiā.[2] Halāyudha Thākura was not a prominent figure. In later lists he is shown as the first among the *Upagopālas*. Rāmcandrapur village was eroded by the Ganges.

According to another school, the twelfth *Gopāla* was Puruṣottama Nāgara. But very possibly he was identifiable with Puruṣottama Dāsa Thākura, son of Sadāśiva, the notable *Mahānta* of the Vaidya caste.[3] Amūlyadhan Rāyabhatta, however, thinks that Puruṣottama Nāgara was a non-Bengali *Gopāla* who belonged to "Nāgaradeśa" in Gujarat.[4] This theory was first in stated *Vaiṣṇavācāradarpaṇa*.[5] But one has to accept Karṇpūra's identification of Puruṣottama as the son of Sadāśiva Kavirāja.

XIV

The *Gopālas* of Hooghly undoubtedly worked hard for the spread of Vaiṣṇavism in middle Rāḍa. The census of 1881 found 12107 Vaiṣṇavas in Hooghly who formed a distinct caste.[6] Many of them were rich traders and agriculturists "who look down upon the lower classes of the sect, and intermarry with the orthodox Hindus."[7] Ninety-three Vaiṣṇava fairs are held in Hooghly.[8] It

1. The interesting legend of Śrīdhara is fully told in CBH : pp. 179-187.
2. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, 1, p. 225.
3. GGD : p. 39, verses 130-131, "*Sadāśivosutonāmnā Nāgara Puruṣottamah.*"
4. *Dvādaśa Gopāla*, pp. 132-133.
5. *Vaiṣṇavācaradarpaṇa*, pp. 353-54.
6. J.A. Bourdillon, *Report of the Census of Bengal*, 1881, Vol. II, p. 239.
7. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal, Midnapur*, (including Hooghly and Howrah), 1876, p. 289.
8. *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Hooghly*, 1972, pp. 340-344.

is believed that Vaiṣṇavism saved the Bāuris, Bāgdīs and Bārujīvīs of Hooghly from Muhammadan proselytisation.[1]

Vaiṣṇava influence on the Dharma cult in Hooghly is "fairly extensive". As in Bīrbhūm, Dharma idols in Hooghly have Vaiṣṇava sobriquets like Nārāyaṇa, Kālācānd, etc.[2] Purely Vaiṣṇava festivals like *Rāsayātrā*, *Dolayātrā* and *Jhulana* etc. are also observed for the local Dharma deities.[3]

In Hooghly annual Vaiṣṇava congregations are held in Raghuvātī, Bandīpur, Ākri-Fatepur and Raghunāthpur.[4] At present most of the Vaiṣṇava *Śrīpātas* in Hooghly have Brāhmaṇa priests.[5] The endeavour of the *Gopālas* was fully supported by the following Vaiṣṇava leaders of Hooghly in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries :

Khanja Bhagavān Ācārya of Gosvāmī-Malīpārā in the Jāngipārā Police Station.
Kṛṣṇadāsa Thākura of Khānākul, who was a disciple of Rāmadāsa Abhirāma.
Basu Khān of Śiyākholā, in Caṇḍītalā Police Station.
Gopāl Basu of Māhesh.
Satyānanda Sarasvatī of Guptipārā, in Balāgarh Police Station.[7]

It is interesting to note that the Sahajiyās tried to use even the *Gopāla* concept for strengthening their apostasy. They tried to show that the twelve *Gopālas* lived a secret life behind their innocent *Gopāla* façade. Pancānan Maṇḍal has found a manuscript of the Kiśorībhajan sect entitled *Dvādaśagopālavarṇavastusevāvāsa*, in which the Sahajiyā nature of the twelve *Gopālas* is explained.[8]

1. Ibid., p. 212.
2. Ibid., p. 198.
3. Ibid., p. 198.
4. Ibid., p. 214.
5. Ibid., p. 212.
6. Genealogy of Khanja Bhagavān Ācārya in *Ācārya Bhagavān Khanja: Tvadīya Vaṃśadhara*, etc. by Pancānan Gosvāmī *et al.*
7. *West Bengal Dislrict Gazetteers, Hooghly*, 1972, p. 211.
8. Pancānan Maṇḍal, *Punthi Paricaya*, Vol. I, p. 83, MS. No. 289, in Viśvabhāratī Collection.

The horizontal spread of the Vaiṣṇava movement in the villages of middle West Bengal between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries was characterised by intense architectural activity. Some of the aforementioned *Gopāla* abbacies were quite renowned for their Vaiṣṇava temples.[1]

Kaśīśvara, described as an *Upagopāla*, built up a good Vaiṣṇava centre in Chātrā, north of Vallabhpur, in Hooghly. He installed images of Caitanya and Nityānanda in a village near Chātrā, which was a land-gift from the Muhammadan *fauzdar* of Hooghly. The probable date of the installation was Śaka 1454 (1532). Kaśīśvara founded the village of Gaurāngapur, which was once bush-covered. The temple wherein the images were later set up was quite remarkable for its peculiarly Buddhist façade. It is built in stone, and centrally located between two *Dolmancas*.[2]

1. Detailed measurements of these temples are given by McCutchion in *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal*. These temples were built in Khānākul-Kṛṣṇanagar (Hooghly), Kālnā and Vaidyapur (Burdwan), Mahesh, Vallabhpur (Hooghly), Saptagrāma (Hooghly), and Rāmacandrapur (Nadiā).
2. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, p. 25. The temple is known as "Mahāprabhu Mā̆ndir".

CHAPTER IX

JĀṆHAVĀ DEVĪ AND VĪRABHADRA GOSVĀMIN

I

One of the positive results of the Caitanya movement was the elevation of the social and religious status of women in Bengal. This remarkable development was first seen in the assumption of ecclesiatical leadership by Jāṇhavā Devī, second daughter of Sūryadāsa Sarkhel, and second wife of Nityānanda.

Jāṇhavā Devī asserted her leadership probably after Nityānanda's death. The Vaiṣṇava chronicles, however, hardly refer to any vital link between the *Gopālas* and Jāṇhavā Devī. She was not invested with religious authority by Nityānanda. Vīrabhadra. her son or step-son, at first sought initiation from Advaita Ācārya, who lived longer than Nityānanda. It is said that Rāmadāsa Abhirāma, the foremost *Gopāla*, persuaded Vīrabhadra to give up the idea of seeking initiation from Advaita. Ultimately Jāṇhavā Devī became his *guru* or *dikṣāguru*.[1] It is said that just before starting for Śāntipur, where Advaita lived, Vīrabhadra entered the seraglio to salute his mothers. Jāṇhavā Devī was then drawing water from a well. She was scantily clad. She at once performed a miracle. Two more arms suddenly sprouted from her shoulders and covered her state of semi-nudity. Vīrabhadra witnessed this miracle, and immediately decided to secure initiation from her.[2]

The evidence of the apocryphal *Vaṃśīśikṣā* and *Muralīvilāsa* suggest that Jāṇhavā Devī sought the patronage of Vaṃśivadan Cattopādhyāya of Navadvīpa, who was a companion of Caitanya.[3] After repeated efforts Jāṇhavā Devī, a childless lady, adopted Rāmacandra, Vaṃśīvadana's eldest grandson, as her son, and initiated both Rāmacandra and his younger brother Śacīnandana. Jāṇhavā

1. *Advaitaprakāśa*, pp. 102-103; *Nityānandaprabhur Vaṃśavistāra*, p. 19.
2. See *Premavilāsa*, ed. Yaśodālāl Tālukdār, Ch. 24, pp. 252-253. The legend of the miracle is given in *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, Vol. 2, 1885, p. 62.
3. *Vaṃśīśikṣā*, pp. 174-181; *Muralīvilāsa*, pp. 49, 62, 65-67.

Devī realised the importanse of forging a link between the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal and the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. She understood that without roots in philosophy and theology the dervish dance of Nityānanda and the *Gopālas* would never achieve respectability in the elite society of Bengal. Her approach was quite different from that of Nityānanda. Whereas Nityānanda easily violated caste and Brāhmaṇical conventions, Jāṇhavā Devī nestled close to the conservative elements, Her speciality consisted in the fact that she probably went to Vṛndāvana twice, and established the connection between the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal and Vṛndāvana. She also worked untiringly for the unification of various Bengali sub-sects localised in different regions of West Bengal.

II

On the first occasion Jāṇhavā Devī went to Vṛndāvana as a learner.[1] She attentively listened to the discourses of Sanātana and Rūpa and met the other gosvāmins. The leading gosvāmins recognised her as an outstanding leader of the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas. Rūpa Gosvāmin himself is said to have explained to her the basic tenets.[2] On her return to Bengal Jāṇhavā Devī first met and conferred with the Vaiṣṇavas of Śrīkhaṇḍa circle led by Narahari Sarkār and his nephew Raghunandana. She requested Narahari to send Śrīnivāsa, a young and active Vaiṣṇava, to Vṛndāvana.[3] It was probably in accordance with her instructions that Āul Caitanya Dāsa, her disciple, went to Vṛndāvana and met Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin.[4]

Jāṇhavā Devī's importance in the post-Caitanya Vaiṣṇava movement is evidenced by the leading role she played in organising the Kheturi festival sometime after 1580.[5] Three Vaiṣṇavas organised

1. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 16. pp. 218-238.
2. Ibid., pp. 224-226. Rūpa Gosvamin is said to have requested her to send Śrīnivasa to Vṛndāvana. Ibid. p. 232.
3. Ibid., p. 235.
4. Ibid., pp. 225-236; *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, p. 67.
5. The date of the festival is uncertain. This date is mentioned by Sukumar Sen, *Bāngalā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, part I, p. 334.

the festival. They were Narottama Datta of Kheturi, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya of Yājigrāma, (Bīrbhūm), and Jāṇhavā Devī of Khaḍadaha. It is indeed significant that all three of them had been trained by the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. Jāṇhavā Devī was regarded as a Goddess (*Īśvarī*).[1] She tried very hard to remove the sectarian and regional differences. Just before the Kheturi festival she ceaselessly travelled to and fro. She consulted the leaders of the different groups. She scrupulously refrained from building up a sub-sect of her own, though she had many disciples.[2] The unifying character of her efforts is best seen in *Premavilāsa* of Nityānanda Dāsa who was her disciple. *Premavilāsa*, in its present form, is considered apocryphal.[3] But the work is absolutely free from sectarian bias. It puts emphasis on the activities of all groups and group-leaders. Jāṇhavā Devī went to Vṛndāvana a second time after the Kheturi festival.[4] In Vṛndāvana she supported the theory of the *licit* (*Vaidhi*) loves of Kṛṣṇa, which was enunciated by Jīva Gosvāmin.[5] On her second visit to Vṛndāvana she was accorded a grand reception by the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins.[6] During her second journey to the holy place she was able to covert a Muhammadan brigand named Kutub-ud-din, along with some other infidels.[7] According to *Premavilāsa* Jāṇhavā Devī returned to Bengal and once again visited Kheturi, Yājigrāma, and Śrīkhaṇḍa.[8] She might have on this occasion conveyed to the Vaiṣṇava leaders of Bengal the final instructions of the Vṛndāvana leaders. Probably she built up a base in

1. Jāṇhavā Devī's great eminence in the Kheturi festival is emphasized in *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 19, p. 310; BRK, Ch. 10, pp. 417-422; and *Narottamavilāsa*, Ch. 6, pp. 99-103.
2. *Premavilāsa* Chs. 5, pp. 47-48; 14, pp. 187-192; 16, pp. 218-238; 19, pp. 279-297; BRK, Ch. 10, pp. 417-420.
3. Bimānbihārī Majumdār, *Śrīcaitanyacariter Upādān*, pp. 477-485.
4. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 15, 213-217; BRK. pp. 429-439.
5. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part. II, p. 14.
6. BRK. p. 435; *Narottamavilāsa*, pp. 129-133; Jīva Gosvāmin is said to have composed 8 eulogistic verses on Jāṇhavā Devī. Vide, *Jāṇhavāṣṭakaṃ*, MS. No. 3053x of Madras Government Oriental Library.
7. *Premavilāsa*, pp. 318-319; BRK. pp. 432-433.
8. *Premavilāsa*, pp. 213-217; *Narottamavilāsa*, pp. 142-143.

Kantakanagara in Burdwan with the help of a rich Vaiṣṇava agriculturist name Candra Maṇḍala.[1] She might also have held a Vaiṣṇava festival in Borākulī village in Murshidābād with the help of her adopted son Rāmacandra.[2]

III

Two questions are very relevant to the reconstruction of the religious career of Jāṇhavā Devī. First, what was her relation with the *Gopālas*? Second, what was her relation with her step-son Vīrabhadra?

Excepting Parameśvara Dāsa of Tarā-Ātpur and Uddhāraṇa Datta of Saptagrāma, no other *Gopāla* really belonged to the circle of Jāṇhavā Devī's disciples. In all probability Parameśvara Dāsa and Uddhāraṇa Datta accompanied her on her journey to Vṛndāvana. Only two of the *Gopālas*, or perhaps three, if we include Kṛṣṇadāsa of Ākāihāt, attended the Kheturi festival.[4] The other *Gopālas*, including the powerful *Gopāla* Abhirāma, were either no more when the Kheturi festival was held, or unwilling to join it. Jāṇhavā Devī did not make any special effort to strengthen and enlarge the *Gopāla* system. Perhaps merely the 'friendly mood' of the *Gopālas* was not acceptable to her.

Jāṇhavā Devī's relation with Vīrabhadra is an indeterminable factor. He did not accompany her on her repeated journey to Vṛndāvana. Both *Vaṃśīśikṣā* and *Muralīvilāsa* record instances of Vīrabhadra's malignity towards Rāmacandra, Jāṇhavā Devī's adopted son.[5] Jāṇhavā Devī, too, did not accompany Vīrabhadra on his journey to East Bengal. According to BRK, Vīrabhadra did not attend the first Khetnri festival.[6] He was not interested in learning

1. Rabīndranāth Māiti, *Caitanyaparikara*, p. 510.
2. *Vaṃśīśikṣā*, p. 185. Another festival was held in Borākulī by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya : BRK : p. 637.
3. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, pp. 108-109.
4. BRK. p. 418; *Narottamavilāsa*, p. 118.
5. *Vaṃśīśtkṣā*, pp. 192-196; *Muralīvilāsa*, pp. 368-372.
6. BRK. p. 418, verse 371. According to *Premavilāsa*, p. 308, Jagaddurlabha, Vīrabhadra's son, attended the festival.

from Jāṇhavā Devī the theology of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins. He cultivated it probably after her death.[1] Finally, Vīrabhadra did nothing to help her unify the sub-sects. He did not make any special effort to support her in her unceasing endeavour to bring the sub-sects under the Vṛndāvana dogma, and level down the angularities of the post-Caitanya Vaiṣṇava movement. Vīrabhadra's disciples probably maintained their distance from Jāṇhavā Devī.

The chronicles give no authentic account of the last days of this remarkable lady. According to *Vaṃśīśikṣā* Jāṇhavā Devī "became fused with the idol of Gopīnātha" in Vṛndāvana.[2] This must be a legend. One must yet be all praise for this remarkable Bengali lady. At a time when each and every 'upper caste' Bengali lady was supposed to be "invisible to the sun" (*Asūryaṃpaśyā*), Jāṇhavā Devī decidedly rebelled against her seclusion, and took a leading part in consolidating the Caitanya movement. Her tremendous energy was manifest in her travels to far off places, and in her tireless zeal in meeting the other leaders of the movement in Bengal and Vṛndāvana.

IV

According to Dimock Jāṇhavā Devī "was a Tāntrik and Sahajiyā leader of considerable power in her own right". His main argument is that "Jāṇhavā seems to have become a Sahajiyā through her adopted son Rāmacandra". Dimock unquestioningly accepts Sukumar Sen's view that "Rāmacandra persuaded his foster mother to the Sahajiyā position".[3] There are several objections to Dimock's theory. He is obviously unaware of the fact that Sukumar Sen has never regarded Jāṇhavā Devī as a Tāntrika Sahajiyā'. Sen's view is that she gradually became interested in *Vaidhi Sādhanā* or 'regular worsip', and later supported Jīva Gosvāmin's interpretation of the legality of Kṛṣṇa's loves.[4] Some ideas of Rāmacandra and the

1. *Vaṃśīśikṣā*, p. 127, *Muralīvilāsa*, p. 388.
2. *Vaṃśīśikṣā*, p. 187 : *Pancavarṣa Pare Kāmapurṇa Kāmyavane| Devīra Milana Haila Gopīnātha Sane.||*
3. *The Place of the Hidden Moon*. p. 52, note 26 ; also, p, 98.
4. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 14.

Bāghnāpārā Vaiṣṇavas have admittedly a Sahajiyā colour.[1] But the orthodox Vaiṣṇavas did not consider either *Vaṃśīśikṣā* or *Muralīvilāsa*, in which the ideas of the Bāghnāpārā Vaiṣṇavas are laid down, a Sahajiyā work. In 1893 Kedārnath Datta Bhaktivinoda, one of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava leaders, reviewed *Vaṃśīśikṣā* in the following manner: "There are several ideas in *Vaṃśīśikṣā* which are excellent. Some of these ideas have a Sahajiyā flavour. Yet, on the whole, the work does not seem to be a Sahajiyā work". (Translated).[2]

Jāṇhavā Devī was very much respected by contemporary Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and their leaders like Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Narottama Datta. Had she been a 'Tāntrika' and 'Sahajiyā' leader, Narottama and Śrīnivāsa, who had been carefully indoctrinated in Vṛndāvana, would not have honoured her as an '*Īśvarī*' or Goddess.[3]

V

Nityānanda's son Vīrabhadra is not mentioned in Vṛndāvana Dāsa's CBH. That is why he is regarded by some people as a fictitious figure, a simulacrum.[4] But no account of the Nityānanda circle would be complete without a reference to the activities of of Vīrabhadra or Vīracandra, Nityananda's son. The orthodox Vaiṣṇavas of the nineteenth century regarded him as some one outside the pale.[5] Vīrabhadra inherited the radicalism of his father. It was manifest in his conversion of two thousand and five hundred Buddhist monks and nuns.[6]

The rapid spread of the Caitanya movement had undermined the Buddhist base in Bengal. Both Kṛṣṇa Miśra Yati, author of

1. These ideas are explained in Ch. 16 of this dissertatton.
2. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, April, 1893, Vol. 5, p. 16. Kedarnath Datta belonged to the Bāghnāpārā circle.
3. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, Ch. 9, p. 101.
4. Bhūpendranath Dutta, *Vaiṣṇava Sahitye Samājacitra*, p. 34; Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Bangabhāṣā O Sāhitya*, fn. p. 325.
5. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, 1894, Vol. 6, p. 22.
6. The legend of the conversion is given in *Nityānandaprabhur Vaṁśavistāra*, pp, 23-35.

Pravodhacandrodayaṃ, and Kavi Karṇapūra, author of *Caitanyacandrodayaṃ*, clearly refer to the connection between the Buddhist *gurus* and the affluent merchants.[1] But the Vaṇik community in West Bengal, and later in East Bengal began to patronise Vaiṣṇavism, by which many members of the community elevated their social position. The conversion of many large groups of people into Vaiṣṇavism must have made the Buddhists utterly helpless. Their great hunger, in the physical sense of the term, is described in *Nityānandaprabhur Vaṃśavistāra*.[2] Other Vaiṣṇava leaders, besides Vīrabhadra, probably wanted to convert the Buddhists. But Vīrabhadra took the initiative. According to Haridāsa Dāsa, the 1200 *Neḍās* (shaven-headed males) were really 1200 prisoners of the Muslim ruler of Dacca. Vīrabhadra made them free and converted them. These *Neḍās* later married. Their wives were known as *Neḍīs* (shaven-headed females). Only four of the original *Neḍās* did not marry. These four men were led by one Gokulānanda who spread Vaiṣṇavism in Rāḍa, East Bengal and the Sundarban region.[3]

A great achievement of Vīrabhadra was his journey to East Bengal and Dacca city. This journey definitely led to the spread of the movement in East Bengal. From the account of the memorable mission given in *Nityānandaprabhur Vaṃśavistāra*, it appears that Vīrabhadra was a very rich man.[4] Many *Mahāntas*, disciples and servants accompanied him. He travelled in palanquins and horse-drawn carriages. The procession carried multi-coloured banners. Vīrabhadra wore different types of ornaments. The impressive procession sang *Kīrtana* and played on numerous types of drums and cymbals. One Nṛsiṃha Dāsa was the leader of the shaven-headed Buddhist monks whom Vīrabhadra had converted into Vaiṣṇavism just before his departure for Dacca. East Bengal was once

1. *Pravodhacandrodayaṃ*, Nirṇayasāgar ed. 1935, Act III, p. 105 : Verse beginning with *Āvāso Layanaṃ*, etc. *Caitanyacandrodayaṃ*, ed. Manīndranāth Guha, p. 56, verse 2, line 2 : "*Vaiśyastu Buuddhā Iva*".
2. *Nityānandaprabhur Vaṃśavistāra*, p. 23. *Kṣudhāya Poḍaye Peta Rahite Nā Pāri| Jvalila Jvalila Vali Kahaye Pukāri.||*
3. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, p. 44.
4. *Nityānandaprabhur Vaṃśavistāra*, pp. 27-28.

a bastion of Buddhism. Vīrabhadra's shaven-headed disciples might be of some use to him in convincing the Buddhists of East Bengal of the growing insignificance of Buddhism after the advent of Caitanya. The poet Jñānadāsa, too, went to Dacca with the great leader. In Dacca Vīrabhadra and his party had to face the hostility of the local Muhammadan grandees. But the shaven-headed disciples "committed so much nuisance" that Vīrabhadra's opponents were thoroughly terrified. His mission was apparently successful. A large number of the Hindus of Dacca accepted the new faith.[1]

From Dacca Vīrabhadra went to Māldā, and there he converted a large number of people with the help of Durlabha Chetri, who himself had been converted by Caitanya.[2]

Vīrabhadra must have acquired unrivalled supremacy in the *Mahānta*-hierarchy. It was perhaps difficult for Rāmacandra, Jāṇhavā Devī's adopted son, to tolerate Vīrabhadra's supremacy. He, therefore, set up his own *Śrīpāta* in Bāghnāpārā, which was infested with tigers. Vīrabhadra ultimately made a compromise with the Bāghnāpārā group.[3]

VI

At first Vīrabhadra had no caste prejudice. He is said to have soundly whipped Gatigovinda, Śrīnivasa Ācārya's son, when he maligned a great leader, Raghunandana, on the ground of his Śūdra caste.[4] But Vīrabhadra later became a supporter of the Kulīna Brahmanas. He negotiated the marriage of his daughter Bhuvanamohinī with a Kulīna Brāhmaṇa named Pārvatinātha Mukhati.[5] Even Devīvara Ghataka, the high priest of *Kulīnism*, and the celebrated organiser of *Melavandhas*,[6] was said to have been converted by Vīrabhadra.[7]

1. *Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers*, Dacca, Vol. V, p. 66.
2. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, p. 36.
3. *Vaṃśīśikṣā*, pp. 190-197.
4. *Nityānandaprabhur Vaṃśavistāra*, p. 34.
5. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 24, pp. 255-237.
6. Devīvara fixed 36 groups of *Kulīna* Brahmaṇas which were known as *Melas*. The *Melas* were endogamous.
   Premavilāsa, p. 257.

Vīrabhadra was closely acquainted with the Vaiṣṇava groups of Śāntipur, Kheturi, Yājīgrāma and Śrikhaṇḍa. It is important to note that he was a very close friend of Śrinivāsa Ācārya of Yajīgrāma, and godfather to the Ācārya's son Gatigovinda.[1] Vīrabhadra paid a visit to Viṣṇupur, where the kings had been converted first by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya.[2] In the first Kheturi festival Vīrabhadra was conspicuous by his absence. But later he participated in another festival in Kheturi, in which he delivered an impressive lecture on the "Brāhmaṇahood" of Narottama Datta, a Kāyastha.[3] Vīrabhadra is reported to have said that Vaiṣṇavism was the noblest of all religions, that only the Vaiṣṇava *Guru* or preceptor, irrespective of his/her caste, had the right to initiate people into the mysteries of the Vaiṣṇava religion, that a true Vaiṣṇava was nobler than a Brāhmaṇa, and that Vaiṣṇavism was incompatible with caste. He said that a real Vaiṣṇava invariably wore an 'inner' sacred thread or *Yajṇasūtra* around his heart, regardless of caste.

Vīrabhadra looked like a 'pillar' of the Caitanya movement to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas of the eighteenth century.[4] It appears that he was gradually but thorougly influenced by the conservatism of Śrinivāsa Ācārya and Narottama Datta. He is said to have visited Vṛndāvana as a pilgrim. On his way to Vṛndāvana he visited Śāntipur and there held secret conversations with Kṛṣṇa Miśra, Advaita's son. From Navadvīpa he went to Śrīkhaṇḍa, and held talks with Kānāi Thākur, Raghunandana's son, behind closed doors. These talks *behind closed doors* probably signified Vīrabhadra's acceptance of the Vṛndāvana dogma. He also met Śrinivāsa and Narottama on his way to Vṛndāvana. In Vṛndāvana he was accorded a grand reception by Jiva Gosvāmin and other Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas.[5]

Vīrabhadra, however, did not belong to any particular group

1. Ibid., Ch. 17, p. 252.
2. Ibid., p. 249.
3. Ibid., Ch. 19, pp. 337-339.
4. BRK. Ch. 9, p. 394 : verse 417 : "*Caitanyabhaktimandapera Tenho Mūla Stambha*".
5. *Premavilāsa*, pp. 342-343 ; BRK : Ch. 13, pp. 635-630. Vīrabhadra also met Śyāmānanda and went to Purī.

or sub-sect. As Nityānanda's son he enjoyed great prestige. He had innumerable disciples.[1] He had also numerous Muslim disciples.[2] The chroniclers scarcely refer to his association with the *Gopālas*. Very probably he had the right to trespass on their dioceses. But he did not make any special effort to make the *Gopāla* organisation stable. At first he did not care much for the Vṛndāvana theology. But after the first Kheturi festival, where Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Narottama Datta, Jāṇhavā Devī and Śyāmānanda worked in unison for the establishment of the Vṛndāvana dogma, Vīrabhadra found it necessary to visit Vṛndāvana. Perhaps Rāmacandra of Bāghnāpārā advised him to seek Jiva Gosvāmin's patronage.[3] Vīrabhadra's long journey to Vṛndāvana (after secret meetings with various group leaders) signified the waning of Nityānanda's influence, and the beginning of the ascendancy of the Vṛndāvana theology in Bengal. The idea of worshipping Kṛṣṇa as a comrade and intimate friend, which was the basic idea of the Nityānanda group, gradually paled into insignificance. The idea of *Manjarī* worship, favoured by the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins, gained supremacy in Bengal.

1. *Premavilāsa*, p. 342 : *Vīracandra Prabhu Mora Dayāla Gosāin/ Yata Siśya Kaila Tinha Tāra Anta Nāi.//* p. 252 : "*Hindu Musalmān Kichu Nā Kare Gaṇana*".
2. *Premavilāsa*, p. 253 : "*Hindu Musalmān Kichu Nā Kare Gaṇana*".
3. *Vaṃśīśikṣā* : pp. 190-197.

CHAPTER X

"ŚĀKHĀ"S AND *"MAHĀNTA"S*

I

The Caitanya movement had no centralised organisation. Caitanya was the highest ecclesiastical authority as long as he lived. Prominent Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal met him every year in Purī and sought his advice and guidance.[1] During a *Rathayātrā* festival in Purī, *sixty-six* leading Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal, including Advaita and Nityānanda, recognised his divinity.[2] Most of these men were later regarded as *Mahāntas*, or Abbots. In all probability the *Mahāntas* were first organised in Navadvīpa even when Caitanya was a householder.[3] The Navadvīpa *Mahāntas* might have done their utmost to neutralise the Brāhmaṇical assault on the nascent sect.

The *Śākhas* or "Branches" are systematised in CCM in Chapters 10, 11 and 12 of *Ādilīlā*. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja mentions four branches, from which stemmed innumerable sub-branches. The four branches were the following :

1. The principal (*mūkhya*) branch of Caitanya with one hundred and fifty-nine followers.
2. The branch of Nityānanda with eighty-three followers, including the *Gopālas* and *Upagopālas*.
3. The branch of Advaita with forty followers.
4. The branch of Gadādhara Paṇḍita with thirty-two followers.

1. CCM : Kālnā ed. p. 133 : *"Ara Yata Bhaktagaṇa Gauḍadeśa Vāsī/ Pratyāvde Prabhure Dekhe Nīlācale Āsi.//*
2. CBH : pp. 414-15 ; Sixty-seven Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal and Orissa who assembled in Purī are mentioned by Murari Gupta : *Śrīkṛṣṇacaitanyacaritāmṛtaṃ*, 4/17, pp. 160-162.
3. CBH : *Ādilītā*, p. 62 : *"Mukundera Gāne Drave Sakala Mahānta"*; *Ādilīlā*, p. 81, *"Eteka Mahānta Sava Sarva Parihari/ Karena Īśvara Sevā Sarva Parihari".//*

   Mahāntas are mentioned in some songs of Vāsu Ghoṣa : *Sakala Mahānta Meli, Sakale Sināna Kari, Āila Gaurānga Dekhivāre.// Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, ed. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, p. 168.

It must be noted that none of the celebrated 'Six Gosvāmins' of Vṛndāvana was prominent enough to be the leader of a "full" branch. Sanātana, Rūpa, Raghunātha Bhatta and Raghunātha Dāsa belonged to the 'main' branch of Caitanya. Rūpa and Sanātana jointly led a 'sub-branch' to which their renowned nephew, Jīva Gosvāmin, belonged.[1] Considered strictly from the hierarchical point of view, the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins, therefore, were far less important than Advaita, Nityānanda and Gadādhara Paṇḍita. The followers of Caitanya who lived in Gauḍa or Bengal were regarded as superior to his followers who lived in Purī or any other place.[2]

II

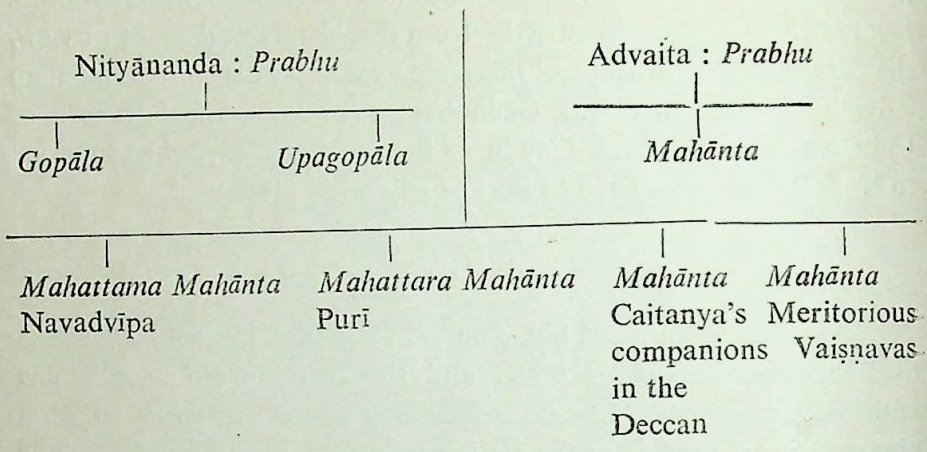
In Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava hagiology, as recorded in such later works as *Bhakticandrikāpaṭala*, BRK, and the two modern compilations entitled, respectively, *Vaiṣṇavācāradarpaṇa* and *Bṛhatbhaktitattvasāra*, Caitanya is referred to as the earliest organiser of the *Mahāntas*, the great majority of whom belonged to his branch. But many *Mahāntas* belonged also to the three other branches of Advaita, Nityānanda and Gadādhara Paṇḍita.

The *Mahāntas* and *Gopālas* were probably classified by Svarūpa Dāmodara with Caitanya's consent. Karṇapūra also refers to his father, Śivānanda Sena, as an authoritative hagiologist.[3] According to Karṇapūra every Vaiṣṇava, who was fortunate enough to belong to one of the branches, was regarded as a *Mahānta*. The *Mahāntas* belonged to the following categories :[4]

1. The Vaiṣṇava associates of Caitanya in Navadvīpa were known as the *Mahāttama* or the 'noblest' *Mahāntas*.
2. The Vaiṣṇava associates of Caitanya in Purī belonged to the lower grade of *Mahāttara* or 'nobler' *Mahāntas*.

1. CCM : Kālnā ed. p. 131 : *Anupama, Śrīrūpa, Āra Sanātana/ Ei Tin Śākhā Vṛkṣer Paścime Sarvottama//...Tāra Madhya Rūpa-Sanātana Vaḍa Śākhā/ Anupama Jīva Rājendrādi Upaśākhā.//*
2. GGD. p. 12, verse 15.
3. GGD. pp. 46-47 : verses 171-172, where Karṇapūra quotes his father's opinion.
4. GGD. pp. 11-12, verses, 13-16.

3. Caitanya's companions in the Deccan were simply known as '*Mahāntas*'.
4. Meritorious Vaiṣṇavas were also known as '*Mahāntas*'.



The specific number of the *Mahāntas* is not mentioned in GGD. In Caitanya's absence the Bengali *Mahāntas* probably worked under the general supervision of Advaita and Nityānanda, the two *Prabhus*. The *Mahāntas*, however, enjoyed considerable autonomy. Possibly towards the middle of the sixteenth century the necessity of limiting the number of *Mahāntas* was deeply felt. Some of the Vaiṣṇavas became *Upamahāntas* or vice-*mahāntas*. But at least Karṇapūra was not prepared to see any fundamental difference between the *Mahāntas* and the *Upamahāntas*.[1]

The names of the 'venerable' Vaiṣṇavas were mentioned in *Bhakticandrikāpatala*. The number of fake *Mahāntas* must have been spirally rising. They endangered the economic and social security of the genuine *Mahāntas*. *Bhakticandrikāpatala*, which is said to have been dictated by Narahari Sarkar to Lokānanda, his disciple,[2] contains a list of fifty-one 'venerable' Vaiṣṇavas, who had to be ritually worshipped along with Caitanya.[3] This work is,

1. GGD, p. 53 : verse 208 : "*Ubhayeṣāṃ Guṇastulyastenāmigaṇitā Mayā*".
2. *Śrīkhander Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, p. 149.
3. *Bhakticandrikāpatala*, Ch. 4, pp. 121-126, verses 21-24.

however, considered unreliable by Bimānbihārī Majumdār.[1] Two reasons are adduced to prove the unreliability. Firstly, Narahari Sarkār's name is mentioned in this work right at the beginning, even before the names of the two *Prabhus*, Advaita and Nityānanda, have been mentioned. Secondly, the work mentions a high-ranking Vaiṣṇava named Jnānānanda, who is never mentioned in the biographies and the chronicles. But Majumdār should have noted that *Bhakticandrikāpatala* is said to have been written by Lokānanda, Narahari Sarkār's disciple, who, quite naturally, mentioned his *guru*'s name right at the outset. As for the unidentifiable Jnānānanda, it was presumably the first name or title of a contemporary devotee, whose full name was inadvertently left out.

The sixty-four *Mahāntas* are mentioned in *Saṃkṣipta Vaiṣṇava Vandanā*, attributed to the authority of Daivakīnandana, a hagiologist of the sixteenth century, and also in Narahari Cakravarti's BRK.[2] The BRK *Mahāntas* attended a festival organised by Śrinivāsa Ācārya and the Vaiṣṇavas of Kātwā for the commemoration of the death of Gadādhara Dāsa, an important follower of Nityānanda. Many of these *Mahāntas* belonged to the four branches. A few of them were disciples of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Narottama Datta, Jāṇhavā Devī and Śyāmānanda. Narahari Cakravarti avers that there were so many *Mahāntas* that their real number was indeter minable.[1] Several names, which are not found in the older lists have been mentioned in BRK (e.g., Lakṣminātha, Nanda Paṇḍita, Vijaya). The inclusion of these names indicates the possibility of the emergence of new *Mahāntas*, or the creation of new *Mahānta* abbacies, towards the close of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth.

Bṛhatbhaktitattvasāra,[3] a Vaiṣṇava compilation prepared in modern times by Rādhānāth Kābāsi, places the *Mahāntas* in "clusters" led by eight outstanding Vaiṣṇavas. These leaders were Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rāya Rāmānanda, Govindānanda Thākura,

1. *Śrīcaitanyacariter Upādān*, p. 585.
2. BRK : p. 394 : Verse 407 : "*Kahite Ki Mahāntagaṇer Nāhi Anta*".
3. *Bṛhatbhaktitattvasāra* ; pp. 664-666.

Rāmānanda Basu, Śivānanda Sen, and the brothers Govinda Ghoṣa, Mādhava Ghoṣa and Vāsudeva Ghoṣa. Each of these clusters consisted of eight *Mahāntas*. But the whole arrangement is a recent innovation which lacks authority.

At an indeterminable time the number of *Mahāntas* was fixed at sixty-four, and that of the *Upamahāntas* at thirty-two. Their names and *Śrīpātas* are mentioned in *Vaiṣṇavācāradarpaṇa*,[1] another recent compilation prepared by Navadvīpacandra Gosvāmin.

Some of the important *Mahāntas* are mentioned below.

1. Ananta Ācārya. (Anantanagar, Hooghly. Advaita branch).
2. Bāṇīnātha Brahmacārī. (Campāhāti, Nadiā).
3. Bhagavān Ācārya (Khanja), (Gosvāmī-Mālīpārā, Hooghly).
4. Bhūgarbha Gosvāmin. (Vṛndāvana).
5. Candraśekhara Ācārya. (Caitanya's uncle on his mother's side. Navadvīpa).
6. Ciranjīva Sena. (Father of Rāmacandra Kavirāja and the celebrated poet Govindadāsa Kavirāja. Śrīkhaṇḍa, Burdwan).
7. Dāmodara Paṇḍita. (Kuliyā, Nadiā).
8. Gadādhara Dāsa. Nityānanda branch. (Āriādaha, 24 Parganas).
9. Govinda Ghoṣa. (Agradvīpa, Burdwan).
10. 'Yavana' Haridāsa. (Buḍaṇ in Jessore, and Purī).
11. Jagadānanda Paṇḍita. (Navadvīpa).
12. Jagadīśa Paṇḍita. (Jasaḍā, Nadiā).
13. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. Author of CCM. (Vṛndvāana).
14. Lokanātha Gosvāmin. (Vṛndāvana).
15. Mādhavācārya. (Navadvīpa).
16. Mādhava Ghoṣa. (Brother of Govinda Ghoṣa and Vāsu Ghoṣa. A renowned *Kīrtana* singer)
17. Mīnaketana Rāmadāsa. (Jhāmaṭpur, Burdwan).
18. Mukunda Sarkār. Brother of Narahari Sarkār and father of Raghunandana. (Śrīkhaṇḍa, Burdwan).
19. Murāricaitanya Dāsa. Nityānanda branch. It is said that in *bhakti* ecstasy, he slapped tigers and played with deadly snakes. (*Vyāghragāle Caḍa Māre Sarpa Sange Khelā* : CCM, p. 186).
20. Murāri Gupta. (Navadvīpa. Author of Caitanya's biography in Sanskrit).
21. Narahari Sarkār. (Śrīkhaṇḍa, Burdwan. See next Chapter).
22. Pratāparudradeva. (King of Purī : 1497-1540 : Branch of Caitanya).

1. *Vaiṣṇavācāradarpaṇa* : pp. 334-345.

23. Pravodhānanda Sarasvatī. (Vārānasī).
24. Raghunandana. (Śrīkhaṇḍa, Burdwan. See next Chapter),
25. Rāghava Paṇḍita. (Pānihāti, 24 Parganas).
26. Rāmānanda Basu. (Kulīngrām, Burdwan).
27. Rāmānanda Rāya. (Purī).
28. Rāmācandra Kavirāja. (Son of Ciranjīva Sena).
29. Sadāśiva Kavirāja. (Kumārahatta, 24 Parganas).
30. Svarūpa Dāmodara. (Purī).
31. Śivānanda Sena. (Kāncḍāpāḍā, 24 Parganas).
32. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. (Navadvīpa).
33. Vakreśvara Paṇḍita. (Guptipārā, Hooghly).
34. Vāsu Ghosa. (Famous hymnologist : Tamluk, Midnapur)
35. Viṣṇudāsa (Ācārya). Advaita branch. (Burdwan).
36. Vṛndāvana Dāsa. Author of CBH. Nityānanda branch. (Kumārahatta and Navadvīpa).
37. Yadunandana. Renowned poet and hymnologist. (Ghātāl, Midnapur).

CHAPTER XI

THE VAIṢṆAVAS OF ŚRĪKHAṆḌA AND THEIR INFLUENCE

I

Śrīkhaṇḍa, a village near the sub-divisional town of Kātwā (Burdwan), was a very powerful centre of the Caitanya movement. The consolidation of Vaiṣṇavism in Śrikhaṇḍa and the neighbouring villages in both Burdwan and Bīrbhūm was the work of two Vaidya brothers named Mukunda Sarkār and Narahari Sarkār. Mukunda, the elder brother, was a *Rājavaidya*, or physician by appointment to the Sultan of Gauḍa. Narahari, too, was a practising physician. The brothers were important members of the pre-Caitanya Vaiṣṇava milieu. Rāyaśekhara, a contemporary Vaiṣṇava poet, wrote that Narahari Sarkār sang *Kīrtanas* even before Caitanya's birth. Later the two brothers became Caitanya's companions. Mukunda lived in Śrīkhaṇḍa. He married, and became the father of a son named Raghunandana, who also became a powerful *Mahānta*. Narahari lived in Navadvīpa and became a close companion of Caitanya and Gadādhara Paṇḍita.[2] According to a scholar, Narahari's position in the Caitanya milieu was seriously disturbed by the unexpected arrival of Nityānanda.[3] Narahari lived in Navadvīpa, always maintaining a close relation with his brother Mukunda and nephew Raghunandana, who had considerable influence among both the literate and the illiterate sections of the society. According to one account Narahari had a wife and four daughters. But the Śrīkhaṇḍa tradition quite emphatically represents him as an unmarried ascetic. In all probability the traditional view is right.[4]

1. "*Gaurāngajanmer Āge| Vividha Rāginī Rāge| Vrajarasa Karilen Gān*"|| Rayaśekhara, "Srīkhaṇḍa Mahimā" *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, ed, Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, p. 303.
2. BRK : Ch. 12; p. 572. Verse 3008 : *Narahari Gadādhara Sohe Dui Pāśa| Hari Vali Caudike Phire Haridāsa||*
3. Rabīndranāth Māiti, *Caitanyaparikara*, p. 134.
4. Ibid., p. 141 ; *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, pp. 28-31.

Mukunda Sarkār initiated many people and trained his son Raghunandana as the future *Mahānta* of Śrīkhaṇḍa. A good *Kīrtana* group gradually evolved in Śrīkhaṇḍa, the leading members of which were Narahari, Mukunda, Raghunandana, Sulocana Thākur and Cīranjīva Sen. Narahari Sarkār was deeply influenced by Gadādhara Paṇḍita. As the 'Female Principle' of Rādhā, he was spiritually juxtaposed with the 'Male Principle' of Caitanya , the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. Some Vaiṣṇavas formed a sub-sect known as the "Gadāi-Gaurānga" sect. They worshipped Caitanya as Kṛṣṇa and Gadādhara Paṇḍita as Rādhā. These Vaiṣṇavas obviously did not support the *Rasarāja-Mahābhāva* concept explained in Chapter 8 of the *Madhyalīlā* of CCM. But the deification of Gadādhara Paṇḍita was fraught with dangerous possibilities. From Navadvīpa 'Gadāi-Gaurānga' worship spread to Śrīkhaṇḍa and some villages of Bīrbhūm.

II

Narahari Sarkār's speciality lay in the intensity of his devotion for Caitanya. He was the leader of a group of people who considered Navadvīpa far more important than Vṛndāvana, and Caitanya far more significant than Kṛṣṇa, This group was presumably constituted by Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, Kāśi Miśra, Raghunandana, Locana Dāsa, Puroṣottama, Vāsu Ghoṣa, Kṛṣnadāsa, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Gadādhara Dāsa, Śivānanda Sen and Kavi Karṇapūra.[1] Very probably the worshippers of 'Gadāi-Gaurānga' and the worshippers of Caitanya formed a coalition against the theological standpoints of Advaita Ācārya and Nityānanda. Narahari systematised Caitanya worship in a work entitled *Śrībhakticandrikāpatala.* It is said that he installed the images of Caitanya in Śrīkhaṇḍa, Gangānagar and Kātwā.[2]

Narahari regarded handsome Caitanya as a *Nāgara* or paramour of the women of Navadvipa. Perhaps he was the earliest proponent of *Gauranāgaravāda* or the strange doctrine of the para-

1. Quotation from *Kṛṣṇa Miśra Carita* in *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, p. 151.
2. *Gaurapadataranginī*, p. 189.

mourhood of Caitanya. He composed a good number of songs in which the amorous conduct of the ladies of Navadvīpa, who were supposed to have fallen hopelessly in love with Caitanya, is delineated in a titillating manner.[1] In these interesting songs Caitanya is depicted as a young man whose very sight made the wives and daughters of the householders of Navadvīpa mad with libido. Caitanya was, of course, capable of maintaining his detachment. One may also find in the *Gaura-Nāgara* songs the old allegory of the soul pining for the Supreme God. But the eroticism inherent in the doctrine was very frankly and fully exploited in many songs composed by its adherents. Locana Dāsa, a disciple of Narahari Sarkār, and author of *Caitanyamangala*[2] even described the *Śṛṇgāra* of Caitanya and his wife Viṣṇupriyā, just before the young saint renounced the world.[3] Even Śiśirkumār Ghoṣh believed that Caitanya "caused a flood of *Rasa*" during the night before he left Navadvīpa for good.[4] At any rate Locana's account puts emphasis on the conjugal love of Caitanya and Viṣṇupriya.[5]

Narahari Sarkār himself represented Caitanya as a veritable *Guru* of the contemporary Casanovas in eight Sanskrit verses.[6] This idea might have a touch of sublimity or spirituality. But it certainly caused the perversion of *bhakti*. The following literal tran-

1. The total number of *Gauranāgara* songs was approximately 108. *Gaurapadataranginī*, Intro. p. 190 ; text : pp. 105-148.
2. According to Bimānbihārī Majumdār Locana Dāsa of Kogrāma, Burdwan, wrote *Caitanyamangala* with a view to disseminating the *Gauranāgara* doctrine. *Śrīcaitanyacariter Upādān*, p. 262.
3. *Caitanyamangala*, *Madhya*, pp. 186-187. According to Bimānbihārī Majumdār the account was first given in *Caitanyavilāsa* of Mādhava, an Oriāh poet. Ibid. pp. 275-76. Caitanya's pre-renunciation coitus with Viṣṇupriyā is also described in a work entitled *Śrīcaitanyamahābhāgavataṃ* of Nṛsiṃa : MS. no. 1691 in Vangīya Sāhitya Parisat : Ch. 31. Locana's account is said to have been corroborated by Nārāyaṇī, mother of Vṛndāvana Dāsa. But Bimānbihārī Majumdār has serious doubts about it. Ibid. p. 276.
4. *Śrī Amiyanimāi Carit*, Vol. 3, pp. 15-16.
5. Vide, PKT. Vol. 5, pp. 208-209, fn.
6. "*Āścaryaṃ Sakhi Paśya Lampataguroh Sannyasīveśaṃ Kṣitau*". Verse quoted in *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, p. 32.

slation of a *Gauranāgara* song may help us correctly measure the spiritual value of the *Gauranāgara* concept :[1]

> (Says a young housewife) : One day I was sitting on the portico in the company of my mother-in-low and sister-in-law. Through the windows I saw Caitanya (Gaurānga) passing by. Like a good girl I coverd up my face and remained seated. But my sister-in-law, who was affected by love, stood up. With a smiling face she glanced at him. Her garment became loose. Her mother asked her to be careful. But she paid little heed to what the old lady was saying. She became nude. I began to giggle, and tried to fix up her garment. But I, too, became nude. The old lady tried to control us. But inscrutable are the ways of God. The old lady became nude, too. We three nudes fixed our eyes on Gaurānga who did not stop, and passed by. Suddenly we got back our sense of modesty. My mother-in-law advised me to keep quiet about this incident. But *Narahari* appreciates the situation, and advises them to cover up their shame.

It is said that Narahari Sarkār also enjoined on the Vaiṣṇavas of Śrīkhaṇḍa to follow certain ethical ideas. They were advised to look upon every man as a friend, to reform the sinners by kindness, to repudiate vanity, egoism and ambition, to practise austerity, charity, simplicity and non-violence, to promote egalitarianism, to pardon men even after they had caused harm, to discipline the sense-organs, to avoid anything which might make for worry in others, to remain unaffected by happiness or sorrow, and to be content with all sorts of circumstances, good or bad.[2]

III

It has been claimed that even before Caitanya had renounced the world, he had invested Narahari with the authority to spread the faith in Śrīkhaṇḍa region.[3] It is now impossible to determine the authenticity of the claim. We find an extremely bantering reference to the *parikaras* (companions/disciples) of Keśava Bhāratī who

1. *Gaurapadataraṅginī*, pp. 128-129 ; *Pada no.* 100. The identity of "Narahari" who composed this song is not definitely known. Presumably he was Narahari Sarkār, since this song is not found in *Gauracaritracintāmaṇi* (ed. Haridāsa Dāsa) of Ghanaśyāma or Narahari Cakravartī, author of BRK.
2. *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, pp. 25-26.
3. Ibid., p. 33.

lived in nearby Kātwā, and who had the uncommon distinction of ritually initiating Caitanya.[1] Keśava Bhāratī, too, might have been invested with that authority. But the Vaiṣṇavas of Śrīkhaṇḍa believe that Narahari Sarkār was permitted by Caitaaya to act as a *guru* even in Puri where he converted a Brāhmaṇa named Lakānanda Thākura, who wrote *Bhakticandrikāpatala*.[2] This work on rituals and hagiology was written before *Haribhaktivilāsa* was imported into Bengal.

Vīrabhadra's preference for the *Vaiṣṇava guru* has already been mentioned.[3] He was probably influenced by Narahari Sarkār who held the view that, if any so-called *guru* opposed Vaiṣṇavism, he was to be repudiated by his Vaiṣṇava disciples.[4] This uncompromising attitude reflected Narahari's aversion to fake preceptors who utilised the Vaiṣṇava upsurge for their own material gains. Vīrabhadra and Narahari Sarkār thus enfeebled the position of the non-Vaiṣṇava *gurus*.

Though Narahari Sarkār was a *Vaidya* (technically a Śūdra), many Brāhmaṇas belonged to his *Śākhā* or branch. The following persons were the principal members of the branch.[5]

1. Thākur Kānāi (son of Raghunandana, Narahari's nephew, and another leader of the Śrīkhaṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas).
2. Thākur Madana Rāya (son of Thākur Kānāi).
3. Vaṃśīvadana (brother of Madana Rāya).
4. Gopāla Thākura (a Brāhmaṇa).
5. Locana Dāsa (A Vaidya poet of Kogrāma, Burdwan. He was a direct disciple of Narahari Sarkār, and author of *Caitanyamangala* and numerous *Dhāmalī* songs).
6. Cakrapāṇi Caudhurī (a Vaidya).

1. Verse in *Rasakalpadruma* by Jagannātha Miśra, ed. Bānāmbara Ācārya Śarmā, p. 503, verse no. 80 : *Āpu Postā Tamākhu Bhāngakusumapānaprama-ttāvitāh| Kanthe Cikkaṇa Kāṣthamālā Vilasad Sadpādamudrānkitāh| Kecit Śyāmagaṇāśca Ke Sakhīgaṇāh Kecinnimāyīgaṇāh| Kecit Keśava Bhāratī Parikarā Nātravakāsah Satām.||*
2. *Bhakticandrikāpatala*, ed. Rākhālānanda Thākur, 1920. The work has 8 chapters.
3. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 19, pp. 337-339.
4. *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, p. 25,
5. The list is given in *Śākhānirṇaya*. Vide, *Rasakalpavallī* pp. 206-210; *Śrī-khaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, pp. 113-115.

7. Nityānanda Caudhurī (a Vaidya).
8. Janārdana Caudhurī (a Vaidya).
9. Lokānanda Ācārya (a Brāhmaṇa. Author of BCP).
10. Śrīkṛṣṇa Pāgalinī (A Brāhmaṇa Lady).
11. Rāmadāsa Ghoṣāl (a *Kulīn* Brāhmaṇa).
12. Candraśekhara (a Vaidya).
13. Lakṣmīkānta (a Brāhmaṇa).
14. Gaurāngadāsa Ghoṣāl (a *Kulīn* Brāhmaṇa).
15. Madhusūdan Dās (a Vaidya).
16. Kaviratna Miśra (a Brāhmaṇa).
17. Kṛṣṇakinkara Dāsa (a Kāyastha).
18. Yādava Kavirāja (a Kāyastha).
19. Daityāri Ghoṣa (a Kāyastha).
20. Kaṃsāri Ghoṣa (a Kāyastha).
21. Giridhārī Dāsa (author of *Parakiyārasasthāpanasiddhānta*, an unpublished essay on the spiritual significance of extra-marital love).

Narahari's nephew Raghunandana was also a very influential *Mahānta*. He had his own circle of disciples, who are mentioned below :[1]

1. Nayanānanda Kavirāja (a Vaidya of Śrīkhaṇḍa).
2. Kṛṣṇadāsa Thākur (a Brāhmaṇa).
3. Mahānanda Caudhurī (a Vaidya).
4. Mālinī Thākurāṇī (Mahānanda's wife).
5. Śrīmān Sen (a Vaidya).
6. Banamālī Kavirāja (a Vaidya).
7. Horki Thakurāṇī (Banamālī's wife).[2]
8. Rāmacandra.
9. Kaviśekhara (a Vaidya : celebrated Vaiṣṇava poet).
10. Kaviranjana (a Vaidya and renowned Vaiṣṇava poet).

The Śrīknaṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas had five distinct groups, namely, the groups led by Mukunda Sarkār, Narahari Sarkār, Raghunandana, Sulocana Sena, and his brother Ciranjīva Sena (father of Rāmacandra Kavirāja and Govindadāsa Kavirāja).[3] Of the aforemen-

1. "Śākhānirṇaya" in *Rasakalpavallī*, pp. 211-214.
2. Horki Thākurāṇī had a ghostly familiar who unfailingly paid her bills for *guru*-worship. The ghost was redeemed after it was made to eat the sacred left-over or *Prasāda* of God Jagannātha.
3. "Śākhānirṇaya" in *Rasakalpavallī*, p 205 : "*Panca Śākhāra Vivaraṇa Śuna Mana Diyā*"...

tioned disciples the richest were Cakrapāṇi Caudhurī and his sons Nityānanda and Janārdana. They had nearly two thousand peasant-tenants who were converted into Vaiṣṇavism by them.[1] The Śrīkhaṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas gradually spread their influence in Takipur, Akbarpur, Eḍugrāma, Kogrāma, Rūpapur, Kulāi, Gangānagar, Ghorāghāt, Ākāihāt and Kātwā.[2]

IV

The Vaiṣṇavas of Śrīkhaṇḍa believe that three distinct schools of thought developed in the Caitanya movement. Nityānanda and the *Gopālas* popularised the 'friendly mood'. The gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana preached mainly Kṛṣṇa worship. But Narahari Sarkār 'broadcast the original and unadulterated concepts of Caitanya himself'.[3] This sectarian claim cannot stand the test of historical scrutiny. They have not been able to show that Caitanya preached the erotic concept of the *Nāgara*. It was undoubtedly the invention of Narahari Sarkār himself.

Narahari's views of the Caitanya movement were clearly and forcefully stated in *Śrīkṛṣṇabhajanāmṛta*.[4] In this work there is no mention of Advaita. Nityānanda is perfunctorily mentioned in the invocatory verse. Obeisance is paid to Svarūpa Dāmodara, but no heed is paid to the *Rasarāja-Mahābhāva* concept. The two most prominent characters in this work are Caitanya and Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Narahari summed up the achievements of Caitanya in the following manner :[5]

> "Caitanya", Narahari Sarkar wrote, "wore merely a loincloth. He was poorly dressed. He renounced the world and became an ascetic. Yet he threw lots of people into a sea of love and made it possible for them to

1. Ibid. p. 207. This is the earliest reference to the conversion of dependent peasants by a Vaiṣṇava *Zamindār*.
2. These places are mentioned in *Śākhānirṇaya*".
3. *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, p. 47.
4. This work was edited by Nityānanda Dāsa, and published by the Raghunandana Samiti, Śrīkhaṇḍa, in B.S. 1339 (1932).
5. *Śrīkṛṣṇabhajanāmṛta*, quoted in *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, p. 47 and Sukumar Sen's *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, part I, p. 372.

enjoy heavenly bliss. The people he saved were innumerable, very powerful, and obdurate like oxen. Some of them were spiritualists. Some of them were blinded by worldliness. They stuck to the path of *Yoga* which is meaningless (without *bhakti*). They were foolish. Steeped in evil, they were drunkards and sinners. Some were untouchable *Caṇḍālas*, and some were Muhammadans, idiots and housewives. Caitanya reformed them only by love, and put an end to their state of being possessed by demons. What more need I say ? Caitanya transformed men into women.

Some of the later followers of the Śrīkhaṇḍa school were probably influenced by the left Tantra. Rāyaśekhara, famous Vaiṣṇava poet, and a follower of Raghunandana, practised Tantra with a female votary named Durgādāsī.[1]

Nityānanda is not known to have ever cultivated the friendship of Narahari Sarkār, though he might have once met Narahari's elder brother Mukunda.[2] Vṛndāvana Dāsa never mentions Narahari Sarkār in *Caitanyabhāgavata*. But it seems that Jāṇhavā Devī had no quarrel with the Śrīkhaṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas. She met them after returning to Bengal from Vṛndāvana.[3]

Narahari Sarkār was the patron of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya. He sent him to Purī.[4] Both Narahari and his nephew Raghunandana made arrangements for Śrīnivāsa's long journey to Vṛndāvana.[5] He was beholden to them for their patronage. He is said to have written eight verses on Narahari, in one of which he described him as an old man with curly hair and a big pelvis.[6] In another verse he showered praise on Raghunandana.[7]

Neither Narahari Sarkār nor Raghunandana was, however,

1. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Vīrbhūm Vivaraṇ*, Vol. 3, p. 41; Sukumar Sen, "Śrīkhaṇḍer Saṃpradāya O Caṇḍīdāsa", in *Vaiṣṇavīya Nivandha*, p. 212.
2. Cuḍāmaṇi Dāsa, *Gaurāngavijaya*, p. 86. Nityānanda met Mukunda "Dāsa" in "Vaidyakhaṇḍa" village. Mukunda Dāsa is described as a native physician or *Vaidya*.
3. *Premavilāsa*, p. 235.
4. BRK. pp. 63-64.
5. *Premavilāsa*, p. 32: BRK. p. 80.
6. "*Vakrākeśaṃ Pṛthukatideśaṃ*". "Narahari Thakkurāṣṭakaṃ" in *Śrīnivāsācārya Granthamālā*, ed. Haridāsa Dāsa, p. 14.
7. Verse quoted in *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, p. 80.

influenced by the Vṛndāvana dogma imported by Śrīnivāsa and his friends. They did not give up or modify *Gauranāgaravāda*. Raghunandana participated in the Kheturi festival. But he did not play any significant part in it.[1] Narahari was acquainted with Narottama Datta, who visited the old leader in Srīkhaṇḍa.[2] But very possibly Ciranjiva Sena ultimately defected from the Śrīkhaṇḍa school. His sons Rāmacandra Kavirāja and Govindadāsa Kavirāja accepted the Vṛndāvana dogma. Rāmacandra Kavirāja was an intimate friend of Narottama Datta.

V

In the eighteenth century the Vaiṣṇava *gurus* of Śrīkhaṇḍa were able to expand the sphere of their activity to the neighbouring districts. Kṛṣṇakānta Nandī, friend and *dewān* of Warren Hastings, and founder of the Cossimbazar House, was initiated by Acyutānanda Thākura of Śrīkhaṇḍa.[3] In the nineteenth century the most renowned spokesman of the Śrīkhaṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas in Navadvīpa was was Bābāji Siddha Caitanya Dāsa. He was born in 1788 and belonged to a Kāyastha family of Mymensingh.[4] According to Śiśir Kumār Ghoṣh three men revived Caitanya worship in Bengal during the nineteenth century. They were Siddha Caitanya Dāsa, Jiyaḍa Nṛsiṃha, Śrī Bhāgavatabhuṣaṇa. Ultimately Jiyaḍa Nṛsiṃha and Bhāgavatabhuṣaṇa differed from each other on some fundamental points.[5]

Still another important representative of the Śrīkhaṇḍa school was a Vaiṣṇava scholar named Gaurakiśora Śiromaṇi, a Brāhmaṇa disciple of Siddha Caitanya Dāsa. Gaurakiśora Śiromaṇi went to

1. *Premavilāsa*, p. 314; BRK. p. 419; *Narottamavilāsa*, pp. 84, 93.
2. BRK. p. 376: *Narottamavilāsa*, pp. 59-61.
3. Kṛṣṇakānta died in 1836. *Jīvanī Kosa, Bhāratīya-Aitihāsika*, Vol. 1, pp. 150-151; *Śrīkaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, p. 240: The *Rājās* of Cossimbāzār sanctioned an annual grant for the maintenance of the Śrīkhaṇḍa diocese. Full account of the expenses incurred by Kṛṣṇakānta on account of the Vaiṣṇavas in 'Sei Bikhyāta Kānta Bābur Duiti Hisāber Bai', Somendra Chandra Nandi, *Aitihāsik*, year I, No. 4. October 1979, pp. 28-54.
4. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana, Vo. 2. pp. 84-96.
5. *Amiyanimāi Carit*. Vol. VI, pp. 30-31; *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. 2, pp. 84-96.

Vṛndāvana where he was recognised as an outstanding Vaiṣṇava leader and ascetic.[1]

Regarding the social base of Vaiṣṇavism in Burdwan the following points may be noted. Despite the fact that the Rājās of Burdwan had a deeper sympathy for the Śaiva-Śākta religion, Kṛṣṇa worship is a very popular religion in Burdwan. It found ready acceptance among the Buddhists and the untouchable Bāgdīs.[2] Both Narahari Sarkār and Raghunandana should be given credit for the horizontal spread of the movement in Burdwan. Śrinivāsa Ācārya highly praised Raghunandana for organising Vaiṣṇava festivals in which even the *Caṇḍālas* freely participated [3] It should also be said that there were in Burdwan other Vaiṣṇavas who did not conform to the Śrīkhaṇḍa doctrine of *Gauranāgaravāda*. They were the disciples of Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita and Hṛdayacaitanya in Kālnā, the disciples of *Gopāla* Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa in Ākāihāt, the disciples of *Gopāla* Uddhāraṇa Datta in Uddhāraṇpur (near Kātwā), the followers of Keśava Bhāratī in Denur, and the followers of Advaita Ācārya's disciple Śyāmādāsa Ācārya in the villages near the border of the Hooghly district.[4] Secondly, in certain Vaiṣṇava circles of Burdwan, the Sahajiyā and the Bāul *gurus* had considerable influence. In the Sahajiyā work *Ānandabhairava* of Premadāsa, a female Sahajiyā *gūru* named Sulocanā or Sulaksmaṇā is mentioned. She lived in a village on the small *Bānkā* river in Burdwan.[5] There is a concentration of Bāuls in the villages under the jurisdiction of Galsī Police Station. There is no statistical information about the Bāuls in Burdwan villages. But they are undoubtedly numerous.

1. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. 2, pp. 52-78; *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, 1893, Vol. 5, pp. 175-77 ; Gaurakiśora died in 1888 or 1889,
2. Bāgdis have five classess, namely, "Tentuliyā", "Metyā", "Kusametyā", "Mallametyā", "Kānsāikulyā", See, Jogesh candra Roy, "Medinīpur Itihās", *Pravāsī*, Agrahāyaṇa, B.S. 1336 (1929), pp. 177-187. J. C. K. Peterson, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Burdwan*, pp. 54-55, 67, 72.
3. *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇav*, p. 80 : "*Ācaṇḍāla Mahāmahotsavakaro Yah Kṛṣṇasaṃkīrtane.*
4. Geographical data in GVA, Vol. 2, Part IV, pp. 1821-1982.
5. "Ānandabhairava" in *Caitanyottara Cāriti Sahajiyā Puthi*, ed. Paritosh Dās, pp. 83, 98-99.

According to Walter Hamilton there were only fourteen "Baistams and Mahantas" in 1811 in twenty-six villages of Burdwan.[1] But the estimate was based upon insufficient data, for it is stated in the census of 1881 that Burdwan had 28652 Vaiṣṇavas who formed a distinct caste. In 1881 the Vaiṣṇava population was 31.62% in Burdwan.[2]

The following statistical account of the religious *Melās* or fairs of Burdwan clearly demonstrates the popularity of Vaiṣṇavism in Burdwan, for which Śrīkhaṇḍa may reasonably claim a good deal of credit ;[3]

Fairs	*Total Number*
Śākta ...	28
Śaiva ...	21
Dharmarāja ...	15
Manasā Cult ...	37
Muhammadan fairs ...	35
Caraka festival ...	5
Hanumāna worship ...	2
Sāntāl tribal fairs ...	2
Vaiṣṇava fairs ...	40
Break-up of the Vaiṣṇava fairs :	
Fairs in honour of *Mahāntas* ...	18
Fairs in honour of Caitanya ...	4
Fairs in honour of *Bhaktas* ...	14
Vaiṣṇava festivals ...	4

1. Walter Hamilton, *Description of Hindustan*, Vol. I, pp. 155-56.
2. J.A. Bourdillon, *Report of the Census of Bengal*, 1881, Vol. I, Tables 33, 34, pp. 134, 137.
3. These data are collected from *Vardhamāna Pariciti*, by Anukul Chandra Sen and Nārāyaṇ Chaudhurī, p. 315.

CHAPTER XII

THE LEGEND OF ŚRĪNIVĀSA ĀCĀRYA

I

Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a key figure in the post-Caitanya Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal, had three great attainments. He was the leader of a party which brought the Vaiṣṇava manuscripts from Vṛndāvana to Bengal. He converted Vīra Hāmvīra, the powerful Malla king of Viṣṇupur in the district of Bānkurā. And he was one of the main organisers of the Kheturi festival.

What was the significance of the importation of Vṛndāvana manuscripts into Bengal? The answer to this question may be found in an analysis of the various theological trends which had evolved in Bengal during Caitanya's life-time and after his death. It is generally assumed that the followers of Caitanya in Bengal had no theology and that it was later prepared for them by the learned gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. A system of coordinated and interrelated theological ideas, which represented the philosophical aspects of Vaiṣṇavism of the Gauḍīya order was, no doubt, developed by the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins. But it would not be correct to say that the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal had no theology before it was brought to Bengal by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and his friends from Vṛndāvana.

The basic ideas of Advaita Ācārya and Nityānanda have already been discussed. They did not practise *bhakti* of the *erotic* type. Advaita's followers ultimately turned Brāhmaṇical. Rādhāramaṇa Gosvāmin, (1730/40-1823), who wrote a commentary on Jīva Gosvāmin's *Tattvasaṃdarbha*. was a descendant of Advaita Ācārya. He was a Vaiṣṇava gosvāmin and a great scholar. He was the author of numerous Vaiṣṇava works, two brilliant essays on *Navyanyāya*, and an important commentary on the *Smṛti* of Raghunandana. The last work greatly strengthened Brāhmaṇical rituals.[1] His Vaiṣṇava

1. Dīnesh Chandra Bhattācārya, *Bāngālīr Sārasvat Avadān*, Vol. I, pp. 237-241.

works were based upon the basic aim of bringing about an adjustment between Vaiṣṇava and *Smārta* rituals.

The very best songs on the life of Kṛṣṇa the baby, the toddler, and the adolescent cowherd, adored by his parents and comrades, were composed mostly by the poets of the Nityānanda 'branch'. Even some Muhammadan *Fakirs* were deeply influenced by Nityānanda's 'friendly mood'.[1] It is rather curious that the historians of the Caitanya movement have ignored these aspects of the movement.

While the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins were writing their scriptures, Caitanya worship was growing immensely popular in Bengal. According to Haridāsa Dāsa, the chief exponents of Caitanya worship in Bengal were Advaita, Nityānanda, Narahari Sarkār, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Śivānanda Sen, Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, and Pravodhānanda Sarasvatī.[2] At least two different varieties of Caitanya worship were prevalent among the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal. The first of these was the concept of Caitanya as the human materialisation of God Absolute. This was the idea of Advaita. The second was the concept of Caitanya as Kṛṣṇa with 'golden colour'. Nityānanda worshipped Caitanya as a friend or as a servant.

Narahari Sarkār worshipped him as a '*Nāgara*'. Gadādhara Paṇḍita worshipped him as Kṛṣṇa, the lover of Rādhā. The followers of Gadādhara Paṇḍita regarded the Paṇḍita as the incarnation of Rādhā.

Different in detail and emphasis, these ideas temporarily established the predominanee of Caitanya over Kṛṣṇa. But it should also be noted that the Caitanya movement had so greatly enhanced the prestige of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* that even the Śāktas accepted it as a sacred text.[3] Kṛṣṇa worship found a place in Kṛṣṇānanda

1. An account of one of these *Fakirs* is given in Kuladānanda Brahmacārī's *Srī Śrī Sadgurusanga*, Vol. 3, pp. 72-74.
2. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, p. 125 fn. Also, *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, p. 151.
3. Vīra Hāmvīra (1587-1619), the Śākta ruler of Viṣṇupur, had a court-scholar named Vyāsācārya. who recited the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* in the king's court. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 13, pp. 175-176; BRK. Ch. 7, pp. 344-45.

Āgamavāgiśa's *Tantrasāra*.[1]

One of the outstanding theoreticians of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal was Kavi Karṇapūra, son of Śivananda Sen, a rich *Mahānta* of Kāncḍāpārā in the district of 24 Parganas.[2] Karṇapūra wrote two biographies of Caitanya, a *Campū*, a *Smaraṇamangalakāvya*, and the hagiological work GGD. He also composed at least twelve Bengali songs which were collected in PKT anthology. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana had an aversion to GGD mainly because in this work Caitanya is more prominent than Kṛṣṇa. A Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava association of Vṛndāvana, called *Caitanyamatavodhinī Sabhā*, which was established towards the end of the nineteenth century, spread the canard that GGD was an "un-Vaiṣṇava" work.[3] Karṇapūra was, however, fully conversant with the undiscovered *Kaḍaca* of Svarūpa Dāmodara, a copy of which might have been sent to Bengal from Puri.[4] His influential father Śivānanda Sen was also a notable hagiologist.[5]

In the ten chapters of *Alaṃkārakaustubha* Kavi Karṇapūra dealt, not with *Bhaktirasa*, but with *Kāvyarasa* from the devotional point of view. The devotion is manifest in the illustrative verses on the loves of Kṛṣṇa. But Karṇapūra is more concerned with the theory of *Kāvya* than with the aspects of Kṛṣṇa's loves. As an authoritative work on *Alaṃkāra*, it is very different from Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, wherein *Alaṃkāra* is nothing but categorisation of Kṛṣṇa's loves and lovers. The following ideas are enunciated and explained in *Alaṃkārakaustubha* :

The theory of *Dhvani* and its relation with *Yoga*.
Sphotavāda.
Relation between *Rasa* and *Savda*.

1. *Tantrasāra*, Basumatī ed. 167-190.
2. Sukumar Sen thinks that Karṇapūra was born between 1516 and 1520. *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 329-331. According to Haridāsa Dāsa he was born in 1520. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, pp. 13-14. See also S.K. De, *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, pp. 41-45.
3. Vide, *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, Vol. 4, 1892-93, pp. 24-25.
4. GGD, pp. 11-22, verses 13-17.
5. GGD, pp. 46-47, verses 171-172 where Karṇapūra quotes his father's opinion.

Types of *Guṇa*.
Aesthetics of *Śavda*.
Categories of *Rīti*.
The theory of 'Defects'.

According to one authority Karṇapūra's preference for "the convention and recipes of the Mahākāvya structure, and his definite bias towards certain classic poets and practices launched him into inconvenient ways which have taken away from the divinity of his hero and have resulted, from the point of view, in *Rasābhāṣa*."[1] Bimānbihārī Majumdār is of opinion that Karṇapūra receded into the background because he attached far greater importance to Caitanya than Kṛṣṇa. Majumdār's contention is that Karṇapūra worshipped Caitanya, and regarded Caitanya worship as "an end in itself".[2]

This view is opposed by Rādhāgovinda Nāth.[3] He quotes chapter and verse to show that there was no fundamental difference between *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and the biographies of Caitanya written by Karṇapūra. The interesting controversy between Majumdār and Nāth reveals the basic difference between a scholar who tries to explain the Caitanya movement from the historical point of view, and a scholar who tries to explain it strictly from the traditional Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava point of view.

The following important points, which are relevant to a proper appreciation of Karṇapūra's ideas, have been elaborated by Bimānbihārī Majumdār :[4]

1. Karṇapūra used the information given in Murāri Gupta's *Kaḍacā*.[5]
2. He wrote *Śrīcaitanyacaritāmṛtamahākāvyaṃ* when he was very young.[6]

1. Śivaprasād Bhattāchārya, (who has edited *Alaṃkārakaustubha*) : "Two Ascriptions Examined", *Our Heritage*, January-June, 1956. Vol. IV, pp. 14-15.
2. Bimānbihārī Majumdār in *Śrīcaitanyacariter Upādān*, pp. 111-113.
3. Rādhāgovinda Nāth, *Śrīcaitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 366-370.
4. Majumdār, op. cit., pp. 86-94, 96-100, 100-102, 107-108, 110.
5. Murāri Gupta's *Kaḍacā* is entitled *Srīkṛṣṇacaitanyacaritaṃ*.
6. S.K. De, *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, p. 34.

3. He tried his utmost to describe Caitanya as a God in *Śrī-caitanyacandrodayaṃ*.
4. Doctrinal differences between the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana and the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal were unmistakably revealed in GGD which was written in 1576.

Rādhāgovinda Nāth tries to refute these well-established points by presenting an impressive array of more than ninety references to the works of Karṇapūra and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's CCM. Nāth admits that Karṇapūra was influenced by Murāri Gupta's earlier work, and that Caitanya worship is stressed upon in his *Mahākāvya*. He admits that in his *Nātaka* Karṇapūra equally emphasizes the importance of the sports of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana and those of Caitanya in Navadvīpa. He even points out that Karṇapūra attached considerable importance to "the mood of the servant". He tries to show that ultimately Karṇapūra regarded Caitanya as the personification of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugality. But he does not say that the *Nātaka*-biography of Caitanya was written by Karṇapūra probably at a time when that particular theory of the manifestation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugality in Caitanya had gained a good deal of currency and authority, owing to its formulation in the undiscovered *Kaḍacā* of Svarūpa Dāmodara. The conjugality-concept could no longer be ignored or challenged by a *Mahānta* like Karṇapūra. Nāth is good enough to admit that there is certainly a good deal of originality in GGD, which is fundamentally different from the Vṛndāvana hagiology. But he says that GGD is not indispensable "for spreading the religion preached by Mahāprabhu". He does not explain this statement. He, therefore, tries to denigrate GGD on the basis of a presumption. Nāth says further that Karṇapūra did not ignore the Vṛndāvana legend on which he wrote *Ānanda-vṛndāvanacampū*. But according to Śukadeva Sinha, the work was an alternative to Jīva Gosvāmin's *Gopālacampū*.[1] Nāth does not express any opinion against *Alaṃkārakaustubha*, though he presu-

1. Śukadeva Sinha, "Vaiṣṇava Kavyaśastre Kavikarṇapūra", in *Ācārya Rādhāgovinda Nāth Smāraka Grantha*, p. 63. These differences are also recognised by Sundarānanda Dās, *Caitanyacandrodaye Viśiṣṭa Tārakātraya*, p. 8.

mably knows that, as a work on *Alaṃkara*, it is almost entirely different from such Vaiṣṇava sectarian works as *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*.[1] It is, therefore, very difficult for us to accept the argument of Rādhāgovinda Nāth that there was no fundamental difference between Kavi Karṇapūra and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. There were other contemporary theologians in Bengal besides Kavi Karṇapūra. In fourteen Sanskrit verses Sadāśiva Kavirāja, a prominent *Mahānta*, elucidated the theology of Caitanya worship.[2] The main theory of the Kavirāja was that there was really no difference between Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya, though they appeared in this world at different times with different or even contradictory qualities and natural inclinations. In verse 11, Sadāśiva Kavirāja wrote that the Caitanya form of Kṛṣṇa did not even look at any woman.[3] According to some later sectarian interpreters this type of equation "is tantamount to conscious imposture and almost amounting to atheism as it goes against the Bhāgavata view of the Absolute".[4]

Sadāśiva's son *Gopāla* Puruṣottama wrote *Śrī Śrī Haribhaktitattvasaṃgraha*, the manuscript of which was found by Haridāsa Dāsa in the library of the Govinda temple of Jaipur in Rajasthan.[5] In this work Puruṣottama elucidated some of the basic concepts of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* from the *Sakhyabhāva* viewpoint or the 'friendly mood'.

II

But the deification of Caitanya, who was not noted either for sound scholarship, or for life-long, painful penance, who had married

1. "Dānavinoda" in the Act III of Karṇapūra's *Caitanyacandrodayaṃ* probably became the model of Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Dānakelikaumudī* (*Bhaṇikā*). Śukadeva Sinha, op. cit. p. 64f. Following the example of GGD, a Vaiṣṇava named Kṛṣṇadāsa wrote *Svarūpavarṇana*. See, Pancānana Maṇḍala, *Punthi Paricaya*, Vol. 3, pp. 310-315.
2. *Śrī Śrī Śacīnandanavilakṣaṇacaturdaśakaṃ* published by Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda in *Caitanyacandrodaye Viśiṣta Tārākātraya*. pp. 26-50.
3. Ibid, verse 11 : *Aho! Nayanagocaraṃ Na Kurute Sa Nārījanaṃ*.
4. G.N. Mallik, *The Philosophy of Vaiṣṇava Religion*, Vol. I, pp. 253-54.
5. Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda, op. cit., pp. 62-68. The works of Sadāśiva Kavirāja and Purusottama Dāsa have been edited and published by Haridāsa Dāsa.

twice, and who was known in Navadvīpa as a rather conceited young man, must have been disliked by the conservative elements, and must have given the followers of the Śaiva-Śākta cults a handle for carrying on blasphemous propaganda. In many Śākta Tantras the Vaiṣṇavas were bantered against as a group of people who were apparently conformist, but secretly given to the orgiasticism of wine and flesh.[1] The Caitanya movement attacked caste. The Vaiṣṇava *Mahāntas* and *Gopālas* seriously endangered the position of the Brāhmaṇa *Gurus*. The post-Caitanya leaders of the Caitanya sect had to face everywhere the bitter antagonism of the Brāhmaṇas, the Śāktas, and the conservative elements.

The Caitanya movement in Bengal suffered from a serious drawback. Caitanya and his followers laid the maximum emphasis on *Kīrtana* and *bhakti*. Owing to this emphasis the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal could not evolve ā comprehensive theological and ritualistic structure, without which no viable religious order could grow up. Lack of a definite organisation strengthened apostasy. Lack of sufficient coordination between the Vaiṣṇava leaders of Bengal after Caitanya's death resulted in sectarian concentrations in different parts of Bengal.

The various problems of the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal were probably intimated to the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins by Jāṇhavā Devī during her first sojourn in the holy city. The gosvāmins appreciated the necessity of establishing a link with Bengal for the sake of sectarian cohesion, without which the entire movement might be undermined by Brāhmaṇical reaction, Śaiva-Śākta opposition, and the uncontrollable mushrooming of innumerable deviant orders. The gosvāmins wanted a reliable, energetic, and trained man who could shoulder their mandate. They found three Bengalis who were able to act as their agents. They were Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Narottama Datta, and Śyāmānanda.

1. Vide, Tārāpada Sānyāl, *Navadvīpe Tantrasādhanā*, p. 2-12; "*Antaḥ Saktāḥ Vahiḥ Śaivāḥ Sabhāyāṃ Vaiṣṇavāḥ Matāḥ*" is a well-known and oft-quoted Tāntrika verse.

III

It is very difficult to disentangle Śrīnivāsa Ācārya of sober history from the Śrīnivāsa Ācārya of Vaiṣṇava legends. Gangādhara Bhattācāryā, Śrīnivāsa's father, was a Rāḍī Brāhmaṇa of village Cākhaṇḍī on the border between Navadvīpa and Burdwan. He was a follower of Caitanya. Śrīnivāsa was taught Sanskrit language, literature, and philosophy by Dhananjaya Vidyāvācaśpati who was acquainted with Rūpa Gosvāmin and Sanātana Gosvāmin. But any further narration of the events of Śrīnivāsa's life depends on the determination of certain dates, namely, the date of Śrīnivāsa's birth, the approximate age of Śrīnivāsa when he first visited Vṛndāvana, and the date of king Vīra Hāmvīra's accession to the Malla throne of Viṣṇupur.

The following dates of Śrīnivāsa's birth show a wide divergence of views :

A. Between 1572 and 1576, according to Rādhāgovinda Nāth. This date is determined according to the accounts of *Premavilāsa* and BRK. But Nāth himself has serious doubts about this date. He himself does not mention any date.[1]
B. 1519, according to Haridāsa Dāsa.[2]
C. 1512, according to Pravodh Gopāl Basu.[3]
D. 1517/1518, according to Bimānbihārī Majumdār.[4]
E. 1585, according to Rādhāmādhav Tarkatīrtha.[5]

In our opinion a crucial point in ascertaining the date of birth of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya was that he was acquainted with Narahari Sarkār of Śrīkhaṇḍa who was older than Caitanya. This point is mentioned again and again in *Premavilāsa*, *Narottamavilāsa*, and BRK.[6] In one of the Sanskrit verses ascribed to Śrīnivāsa himself,

1. *Śrīcaitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 24.
2. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. I, p. 206.
3. Pravodh Gopal Basu, "Śrīnivāsa Ācārya Prabhur Jīvanacarita", *Gaurāngasevaka*, Pauṣa, B.S. 1318 (1911), p. 397.
4. *Govindadāser Padāvalī O Tānhar Yuga*, pp. 400-403.
5. Rādhāmādhav Tarkatīrtha, "Śrīnivasa Ācārya", *Our Heritage*, January-June, 1954, Vol. 2, Part I, 191-192.
6. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 4, pp. 31-32, *Narottamavilāsa*, Ch. 2, p. 18, verse quoted from Kavi Karṇapūra's *Guṇalesasūcakaṃ*: BRK, Ch. 2, pp. 50-51.

Narahari Sarkār is described as an old man with curly hair and huge hips.[1] That Narahari Sarkār might be living at the dates mentioned by Nāth and Tarkatīrtha is quite inconceivable. Naturally the dates mentioned by Haridāsa Dāsa, Bimānbihāri Majumdār and Provodh Gopāl Basu have a high degree of probability. We may conclude that Śrīnivāsa was born sometime in the second, or possibly in the beginning of the third decade of the sixteenth century.

Some of the conflicting dates of Śrīnivāsa's first journey to Vṛndāvana are mentioned below :

A. 1592, according to Rādhāgovinda Nāth.[2]
B. 1591, according to Dīnesh Chandra Sen.[3]
C. 1564, according to Bimānbihārī Majumdār.[4]

Rādhāgovinda Nāth does not believe in most of the Śrīnivāsa legends given in *Premavilāsa* and *Bhaktiratnākara*. But he believes in *Bhaktiratnākara*'s account of Śrīnivāsa's arrival in Vṛndāvana at a certain night of the full moon. Nāth's unshakable belief in this unverifiable account makes him consult the *Panjikā* or ephemeris, which helps him determine what he regards as the exact date of Śrīnivāsa's arrival in Vṛndāvana, on a night of the full moon.[5] Dīnesh Chandra Sen's date is a mere supposition which is not based upon an analysis of facts. If we assume that Śrīnivāsa was born towards the end of the second decade, or beginning of the third decade of the sixteenth century, Majumdār's date, 1564 A.D., would seem to be approximate and, therefore, tentatively acceptable.

The next chronological problem centres round the date of the accession of Vīra Hāmvīra whom Śrīnivāsa converted into Vaiṣṇavism after his return from Vṛndāvana. The following dates are mentioned :

A. 1591, according to L.S.S.O'Malley.[6]

1. "Naraharithakkurāṣṭakaṃ" in *Śrīnivāsācāryagranthamālā*, p. 14 : "*Vakrākeśaṃ Pṛthukatideśaṃ*".
2. *Śrīcaitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 22
3. *Vaishnava Literature*, p. 171.
4. *Govindādāser Padāvalī O Tānhār Yuga*, pp. 400-403.
5. *Śrīcaitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 22 : BRK, Ch. 4, p. 135.
6. *Gazetteers of Bengal, Bankura*, p. 26.

B. 1591, according to Amiya Kumār Banerji.[1]
C. 1591, according to Rādhāgovinda Nāth.[2]
D. 1596, according to W.W. Hunter.[3]
E. 1587, according to Dīnesh Chandra Sen.[4]
F. 1587, according to Nikhilnāth Rāy.[5]
G. 1575, according to Bimānbihārī Majumdār.[6]

We accept the date mentioned by Bimānbihāri Majumdār for the following reasons :

Firstly, it is mentioned in the Vaiṣṇava annals that Śrīnivāsa Ācārya converted Vīra Hāmvīra just after returning to Bengal from Vṛndāvana. If it is assumed that he went to Vṛndāvana in 1564 or thereabouts, he could not have converted Vīra Hāmvīra sometime in the nineties of the sixteenth century. Secondly, Majumdār's date tallies with the Malla regnal era which began from 694 according to Haraprasād Śāstrī.[7] Thirdly, it is in general conformity with the biographical detail given in the Vaiṣṇava chronicles.

Śrīnivāsa Ācārya went to Vṛndāvana after his first marriage possibly in 1564 or thereabouts, when he was a middle-aged and very handsome man. He had already earned some fame as a Vaiṣṇava scholar unattached to any particular sub-sect. He was acquainted with Viṣṇupriyā Devi, Jāṇhavā Devī, Vīrabhadra, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Narahari Sarkār, Raghunandana, *Gopāla* Abhirāma Rāmadāsa, *Gopāla* Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, Vaṃśivadana Cattopādhyāya, and Īśāna Nāgara. He visited Purī, Navadvīpa, Śrīkhaṇḍa, and Khaḍadaha.[8] According to BRK Śrīnivāsa married after returning

1. *Śrīcaitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, p. 23.
2. *Gazetteers of West Bengal, Bankura*, p. 96.
3. *Annals of Rural Bengal*, Appendix-E, p. 445. The date is changed into 1576 in the *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. 4, p. 235.
4. *Bṛhat Vanga*, Vol. 2, p. 1109. Sen quotes the date given in the *Rāja Panji* or Royal Genealogy of the Malla Dynasty of Viṣṇupur.
5. Quoted by Rabīndranāth Māity, *Caitanyaparikara*, p. 624.
6. *Govindadāser Padāvali O Tānhār Yuga*, pp. 400-403.
7. Haraprasād Śāstrī, "The Malla Era of Viṣṇupur", *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1927, III, pp. 180-181.
8. The details of Śrīnivāsa's travels and acquaintances are found in *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 4, BRK. Ch. 4.

to Bengal from Vṛndāvana in accordance with the advice of old Narahari Sarkār.[1] But the greater probability is that Narahari might have advised him to marry and raise a family before he started for Vṛndāvana. This probability grows strong when it is mentioned in the chronicles that Śrīnivāsa had an old mother who needed the loving care of a daughter-in-law during his absence. Secondly, Narahari Sarkār, who was considerably older than Caitanya, might have died even before Śrīnivāsa returned to Bengal from Vṛndāvana.[2]

Why, then, do the chronicles mention Śrīnivāsa's meeting with Narahari Sarkār after his return to Bengal? It seems that the chroniclers wanted to lend authority to Śrīnivāsa's mission by inventing the fiction of Narahari Sarkār's approval of the same. It is quite reasonable to think that Narahari Sarkār died either before Śrīnivāsa's departure for Vṛndāvana, or during his sojourn in the holy town. It is also reasonable to suppose, considering the old age of Śrīnivāsa's mother, that he married and settled in Yājīgrāma following Narahari Sarkār's advice, even before he started for Vṛndāvana. Gopāla Cakravartī, Śrīnivāsa's father-in-law, was a rich landlord of Yājīgrāma.[3] Śrīnivāsa's fiirst wife was called *'Īśvarī'*, a title which was also bestowed on Jāṇhavā Devī. Śrīnivāsa again married. It is said that his second wife Padmāvatī fell in love with him even before her marriage with him.[4] The legend of the love-marriage perhaps represents a half-hearted attempt on the part of Śrīnivāsa's followers to drape his marriage in old age with colourful romance.

1. BRK, Ch. 8, Verses 489-505.
2. If we suppose that Śrīnivāsa returned to Bengal in 1576 or thereabouts, Narahari Sarkār must have been more than hundred years of age at that date. It is said that Narahari Sarkār achieved some fame as a singer of *Kīrtanas* even before Caitanya's advent: *"Gaurāngajanmer Āge| Vividha Rāginī Rāge| Vrajarasa Karilen Gāna"|| Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, ed. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, p. 303.
3. BRK. Ch. 8, verses 489-500; *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 17, pp. 247-48.
4. *Premavilāsa*, p. 249. *Karṇānanda*, Ch. I, pp. 8-9, mentions the following children of Śrīnivāsa: Sons:- Vṛndāvana Ācārya, Rādhākṛṣṇa Ācārya, Govindagati; Daughters:- Hemalatā, Kṛṣṇapriyā, Kāncanalatikā. Of them, Hemalatā later became a powerful Vaiṣnava leader of Murshidābād.

Long before his departure for Vṛndāvana, Śrīnivāsa probably spent a few years as a neophyte in Navadvīpa. Here he cultivated acquaintance with all Vaiṣṇava groups. Narahari Sarkār and Raghunandana were, no doubt, his mentors. According to BRK, Raghunandana himself negotiated his first marriage. But he fully enjoyed the confidence of all groups. He was undoubtedly the most experienced agent who could establish the necessary contact between Bengal and far Vṛndāvana. Very significant is a statement in *Anurāgavallī* to the effect that Gadādhara Paṇḍita advised Śrīnivāsa to go to Vṛndāvana.[2] Gadādhara Paṇḍita must have been aware of the fact that the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana were working out a theory of *Ujjvalarasa* of which he, being regarded as Rādhā's incarnation, was a distinguished champion. From Gadādhara Paṇḍita's view the liaison with Vṛndāvana was extremely urgent. Also very significant is a statement in the *Premavilāsa* to the effect that Narahari Sarkār expressed his impatience at the delay in Śrīnivāsa's departure for Vṛndāvana.[3] Jāṇhavā Devī, Narahari Sarkār and Gadādhara Paṇḍita sent him to Vṛndāvana. Highly significant is also the legend of Śrīnivāsa's predicament in the residence of *Gopāla* Abhirāma Rāmadāsa. Abhirāma whipped Śrīnivāsa thrice.[4] Śrīnivāsa was described in later legend as 'half' disciple of Abhirāma, who "strengthened" him by the use of the whip.

Śrīnivāsa probably started for Vṛndāvana sometime between 1560 and 1570. He first went to Benāras whence he proceeded towards Vṛndāvana. In Vṛndāvana he met Jīva Gosvāmin and Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin. Rūpa and Sanātana were no more. Jīva Gosvāmin made proper arrangements for his stay in the holy city. Gradually Śrīnivāsa became acquainted with the other leading Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana. It is said that he was initiated

1. BRK. Ch. 8, Verses 489-505.
2. *Anurāgavallī*, 3rd ed. p. 10.
3. *Premavilāsa* Ch. 5, p. 52.
4. Ibid., Ch. 5, p. 51 : *Premete Rodana Kare Kara Yora Kari| Uthiyā Gosāyin Cāvukera Vāḍi Māri.|| Bhāsāyinu Bhāsāyinu Vali Mārena Cāvuka| Śrīnivāsa Ānande Vaḍa Preme Hāle Vuka.|| Mārilena Tina Cāvuka Āpanā Sākṣāte| Vāhira Haiyā Mālinī Dharilena Tāra Hāte.||*

by Gopāla Bhattā Gosvāmin.[1] There is another view of Śrīnivāsa's initiation. His association with the Śrīkhaṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas was considerably long. It has been suggested that he had been initiated by Raghunandana, Narahari Sarkār's nephew.[2] The probability of his journey to Vṛndāvana, with a definite mission, not before, but after his initiation, is very strong, since an important Vaiṣṇava like Śrīnivāsa Ācārya could not remain uninitiated till he attained the middle age. Perhaps Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin acted as his *Śikṣāguru*. *Premavilāsa* makes it plain that Śrīnivāsa was thoroughly trained by Jīva Gosvāmin himself.[3] Śrīnivāsa lived in Vṛndāvana for several years.[4] He met Narottama Datta and Śyāmānanda in Vṛndāvana. Jīva Gosvāmin and the other leading gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana decided in a meeting to invest the three Bengalis with the heavy responsibility of carrying copies of the important Vṛndāvana manuscripts over to Bengal. The manuscripts brought to Bengal are not specifically mentioned in the chronicles. In all probability the three men brought to Bengal the principal works of Sanātana and Rūpa and the completed works of Jīva Gosvāmin. Since Śrīnivāsa was a disciple of Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin it may be safely assumed that he brought to Bengal *Haribhaktivilāsa*.[5]

The three weary travellers reached Bengal. But the two cart-loads of manuscripts were stolen by brigands in a village named Gopālpur which was situated within the boundary of the Malla kingdom of Viṣṇupur.[6] The loss of the precious manuscripts was

1. BRK. Ch. 4, pp. 88-89, verses 374-389.
2. Rādhāmādhav Tarkatīrtha, op. cit. *Our Heritage*, Jan-June, 1954, Vol 2, Part I, pp. 191-192.
3. *Premavilāsa*, p. 138: *Śrīrūpera Sthāne Jīva Yata Paḍiyāchila/ Śrīnivāsa Hṛdaye Artha Sava Prakāśila ||*
4. *Anurāgavallī*, Ch. 4, verse 24.
5. Nath, *Śrīcaitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 11-12.
6. The legend of the brigands is given in *Premavilāsa*. Ch. 13. BRK. Ch. 7. It is stated in the *Premavilāsa* that when old Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja heard of this unfortunate development, he committed suicide. *Premavilāsa*, p. 169. Rādhāgovinda Nāth shows that this legend of suicide had no basis in truth, and that the Kavirāja's death was caused by "the pang of separation from Kṛṣṇa". Nath's explanation is as much mystic as that of the *Premavilāsa*. *Śrīcaitanyacaritāmṛter Bhūmikā*, pp. 16-17.

a staggering blow, but Śrīnivāsa advised Narottama and Śyāmānanda to pursue their respective missions. He himself went to Viṣṇupur. At this troublous time he was helped by a villager named Kṛṣṇavallabha Cakravartī. In Vīra Hāmvīra's court Śrīnivāsa was involved in a theological controversy with Vyāsācārya, the Court Scholar and Mythologist. Vyāsācārya was defeated by him. The defeat of the Court Scholar was inevitably followed by Vīra Hāmvīra's conversion. Both Vyāsācārya and Vīra Hāmvīra embraced Vaiṣṇavism and became Śrīnivāsa's disciples. He got back the manuscripts because the brigands who had stolen them were Vīra Hāmvīra's retainers. He spent some months in Viṣṇupur where the Caitanya cult began to be exclusively patronised by the reigning king. The date of this highly significant event was probably 1575-1576.[1]

IV

The conversion of Vīra Hāmvīra made Śrīnivāsa famous and powerful. He grew rich by selling and distributing manuscripts.[2] He also earned a good income from his profession of reciting and interpreting the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.[3] Śrīnivāsa is said to have composed at least one beautiful Bengali song, but Sukumar Sen thinks that it was probably written for his *Guru* (Śrīnivāsa Ācārya) by the celebrated Vaiṣṇava poet Govindadāsa Kavirāja.[4]

In a Sanskrit work entitled *Śrīnivāsaśākhānirūpaṇaṃ*[5] and the

1. The story of the conversion of Vīra Hāmvīra is given in full in BRK. Ch. 7, pp. 341-356. The King's importance is discussed in Mirzā Nāthan's *Bāhāristān-i-Ghaibi*. See, Jadunāth Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, New Delhi, Janaki Prakasan, 1977, Chapter XIII, p. 236. Vīra Hāmvira at first helped the Mughals, and later rebelled against them, and defeated them. Sarkar, Ibid. pp. 291-292.
2. *Śrinivāsācāryagranthamālā*, "Guṇaleśasūcakaṃ", verse 67.
3. "Guṇaleśasūcakaṃ", verse 91.
4. The song begins with *Vadanacānda Kona| Kundāre Kundila Go| Ke Nā Kundile Duti Ānkhi|* Sukumar Sen, *Bāngalā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part. I, p. 451.
5. *Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, ed. Haraprasād Śāstrī, Vol. IV, 1923, pp. 117-18; Asiatic Society MS. No. 5638.

other chronicles forty-two important disciples of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya are mentioned.[1]

Haridāsa Dāsa gives the following list of the disciples of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya :[2]

(A) *Six Cakravartīs.*
Śrīdāsa, Gokulānanda, Śyāmādāsa, Vyāsācārya, Gobinda, Nārāyaṇa.

(B) *Eight Kavirājas.*
Rāmacandra, Govindadāsa, Karṇapūra, Nṛsiṃha, Bhagavān, Vallabhī, Gopīramaṇa, Gokula.

(C) *Six Thākuras.*
Rāmakṛṣṇa Cattarāja, Kumudānanda Kularāja, Rādhāvallabha Maṇḍala, Jayārama Cakravartī, Rūpa Ghataka, Thakurdāsa Thākura.

(D) *One King.*
Vīra Hāmvīra.

Śrīnivāsa Ācārya had two disciples in Goās, Murshidābad, named, respectively, Balarāma and Ramakṛṣna Kavirāja. Ramakṛṣna Kavirāja is said to have gone to Manipur in Assam, and there converted the local king into Vaiṣṇavism.[3] Jāyagopāla Dāsa, another important disciple of Śrīnivāsa, is not mentioned in the lists of *Premavilāsa* and *Karṇānanda.* He was a learned Kāyastha *guru* who had Brāhmaṇa disciples. Probably he was not authorised to have Brāhmaṇa disciples. He might have been involved in ideological controversies with Śrīnivāsa and the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana, the consequence of which was his explusion from the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order. Jayagopāla Dāsa evidently opposed the growing Vaiṣṇava conformity to caste under the influence of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins. He was the author of a good number of tracts.[4]

1. A much bigger list is given in *Premvilāsa*, Ch. 20, pp. 346-351.
2. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. I, p. 206.
3. GVA, 2, p. 1863 : see "Goās". According to Dīnesh Chandra Sen the kings of Viṣṇupur bore the expenses of spreading the faith in Bīrbhūm, Bānkura, Burdwan, Tripurā and Maṇipur. *Bṛhat Vanga*, p. 756.
4. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 63-64. Also, BRK, Ch. 14, p. 638, verses 180-181. Jayagopāla lived in Kāndrā village. He was expelled by Vīrabhadra. Vīrabhadra's letter is quoted in BRK. p. 638 : "*Tena Sārdhaṃ madīyajanena Kenāpyālāpādikaṃ Na Kriyate, Mayāpi Niṣiddhaṃ. Bhavatāpi Tathālāpādikaṃ Na Kartyavyamiti*".

V

It is evident that Śrīnivāsa had considerable following in Burdwan, Bankura, Murshidabad and Birbhum. However, it is quite difficult to reconstruct the sequences of his attempt to establish the primacy of the Vṛndāvana view-point over the existing 'branches' in Bengal. A series of unverifiable legends are given in the chronicles like BRK and *Premavilāsa* and other similar works, from which the basic facts cannot be easily deducted. Of these chronicles, that of Narahari Cakravartī, which is recorded in BRK, seems to be the most cohesive. It is said that Śrīnivāsa advised the repentant King Vīra Hāmvīra to practise chanting of the 'name', and came to Yājīgrāma with the recovered manuscripts. It is also said that he afterwards met both Narahari Sarkār and Gadādhara Paṇḍita.[1] Assuming that these events took place in 1575-76, it is difficult to accept the story of Śrīnivāsa's meeting with Narahari Sarkār at this time when Narahari must have crossed the age of one hundred years. BRK also informs us that Śrīnivāsa, Rāmacandra Kavirāja and Śyāmānanda went to Vṛndāvana after Narahari Sarkār's death. That was Śrīnivāsa's second journey to Vṛndāvana, a journey which was unscheduled.[2] Śrīnivāsa undertook this journey only with a view to consulting the Vṛndāvana leaders before finalizing the strategy of preaching their dogma in Bengal. Once again Śrīnivāsa had to listen to Jīva Gosvāmin's preachings, and particularly to an explanation of the theological basis of *Gopālacampū*. The probability is that Śrīnivāsa reported to Jīva Gosvāmin the strength of the *Parakiyā* concept in Bengal, and that Jīva Gosvāmin advised him to counteract it by preaching the *Svakiyā* doctrine elucidated in his *Gopālacampū*.[3] Śrīnivāsa, Rāmacandra Kavirāja and Śyāmānanda returned to Bengal with a programme of action which was possibly chalked out for them by Jīva Gosvāmin himself. Śrīnivāsa first went to Viṣṇupur and ritually converted Vīra Hām-

1. BRK, Ch. 7, pp. 347. 356-57, 357-361.
2. BRK. Ch. 9, pp. 383-384.
3. BRK. p. 384, verses 106-107.

vīra.[1] He also made arrangements for the initiation of Harinārāyaṇa, king of Śikharabhūmi, by the son of an important Vaiṣṇava named Trimallabhatta.[2] Śrīnivāsa thus commanded the obedience of two rich and powerful kings. From this time onwards the 'territorial' aristocracy in North and West Bengal would, in general, lend powerful support to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava abbacies and dioceses.

Śrīnivāsa next consulted two prominent leaders of Bengal. They were Yadunandana Cakravartī, a disciple of Gadādhara Dāsa, and a resident of Kātwā, and Raghunandana of Śrīkhaṇḍa.[3] The Vṛndāvana dogma could not be preached without their co-operation. Śrīnivāsa, Yadunandana and Raghunandana consecutively held two Vaiṣṇava festivals in Kātwā and Śrīkhaṇḍa. The first festival was held in Kātwā on the occasion of the anniversary of the death of Gadādhara Dāsa of the Nityānanda branch. The *Mahāntas* who joined it are mentioned in BRK.[4] Most of them belonged to the branches of Advaita and Nityānanda. These *Mahāntas* also participated in the second festival in Śrīkhaṇḍa which was organised on the occasion of the anniversary of Narahari Sarkār's demise.[5] Very significant is also the legend of another festival which was unofficially held by Śrīnivāsa himself at Yājīgrāma before the Śrīkhaṇḍa festival.[6] It is said that two sons of Advaita Ācarya, and Vīrabhadra himself, joined these festivals. Vīrabhadra could not remain aloof. All other *Mahāntas* followed his example. In the Yājīgrāma festival Śrīnivāsa explained the significance of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* in accordance with the interpretations of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins.[7] Listening to the interpretation, Vīrabhadra grew ecstatic and danced a beautiful jig![8] One may safely conclude that during these three

1. BRK. p. 389.
2. BRK. p. 391.
3. BRK. pp. 391-392.
4. BRK. pp. 393-394.
5. BRK. pp. 395-398.
6. BRK. pp. 397-98.
7. BRK. pp 398-399.
8. BRK. p. 401.

consecutive festivals Śrīnivāsa and his friends succeeded in creating a consensus in favour of the Vṛndāvana dogma. This was very necessary for holding a bigger and more representative assembly at Kheturi in the district of Rajashahi, sometime after 1580.[1] Another festival was held in Kāncangariā in Murshidabad by Gokula and Śrīdāsa, at Śrīnivāsa's request, in observance of the death anniversary of Dvija Haridāsa Ācārya.[2] The strategy of holding festivals with a view to disseminating the theology of Vṛndāvana must have been fixed by Jīva Gosvāmin during Śrīnivāsa's second sojourn in the holy town. The Kheturi festival, organised by Śrīnivāsa, Narottama Datta and Jāṇhavā Devī, was the most important and the biggest of these festivals. In this festival Śrīnivāsa introduced Kṛṣṇa worship "in accordance with the directions of Rūpa Gosvāmin".[3] We may, however, assume that in Bengal the authoritative Vṛndāvana dogma was introduced in a democratic manner, through consensus, as the faith of the majority of the Vaiṣṇavas of the Caitanya order.

Vyāsācārya, Court-Scholar of Viṣṇupur, his son Śyāmādāsa Cakravartī, and Rāmacandra Kavirāja formed the nucleus of the first Vaiṣṇava school of theology which was directly controlled by Jīva Gosvāmin. These men maintained their link with Vṛndāvana through couriers.[4] Rāmacandra Kavirāja was recognised as *Kavirāja*, King of Poets, by the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins.[5] He must have written some theological works. But only the manuscript of *Siddhāntacandrikā*, which is said to have been composed by him, was first discovered in the bush-covered and desolate *Śrīpāta* of his younger brother Govindadāsa Kavirāja in Budhuri village of Murshidabad.

1. This date is approximate. The festival might have also taken place after 1580. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 334 fn-3. According to Dinesh Chandra Sen it was held probably in 1605. *Bṛhat Vanga*, Vol. 2, p. 758.
2. BKK. Ch. 10, pp. 407-408.
3. *Narottamavilāsa*, Ch. 6, p. 91 : *Śrīrūpagosvāmikṛta Sakala Vidhāne| Karila Sakala Kṛyā Ati Sāvadhāne.||*
4. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 14, pp. 189-193, BRK, pp. 386-388, 632-634.
5. BRK, Ch. p. 388 : *Suni Rāmacandrera Kavitva Camatkāra| Kavirāja Khyātī Haila Sanmata Savāra.||*

district.[1] It is an insignificant manuscript of six pages. It is written in Bengali *Payār* verse on the following subjects :

On the nature of the eternal sports of Kṛṣṇa.
On the idea of the pang of love manifest in *Māthura.*
On the eternal adolescence of Kṛṣṇa.
On the different regions of Vṛndāvana.
On the Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya equation.

Vīra Hāmvīra learnt theology from Rāmacandra Kavirāja, who taught him the *Sādhyasādhana* theory.[2] Once a theological dispute was held in Yājīgrāma on the relative merits of the 'licit' and 'illicit' loves of Kṛṣṇa. The persons who participated in the debate were Vyāsācārya, Narottama Datta, Rāmacandra Kavirāja, Govindadāsa Kavirāja, and other Vaiṣṇavas.[3] Rāmacandra and Govindadāsa supported the theory of 'illicit' loves, and were opposed by Vyāsācārya. The dispute was referred to Jīva Gosvāmin for his final verdict.

Jīva Gosvāmin never came to Bengal. But he constantly maintained his close connection with his Bengali followers. The following events, as recorded in the Vaiṣṇava chronicles, clearly reveal Jīva Gosvāmin's unshakable hold on the emerging leaders of the post-Caitanya Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal :

1. Jāṇhavā Devī went to Vṛndāvana at least twice in order to consult Jīva Gosvāmin on ecclesiastical matters. On both occasions she received instructions from him.[4]
2. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya went to Vṛndāvana at least twice in order to consult Jīva Gosvāmin on important theological and organisational matters [5]
3. Narottama Datta received instructions from Jīva Gosvāmin while he was in Vṛndāvana.[6]

1. "Śrīpāta Budhuri", *Śrī Gaurāngasevaka*, ed. Amūlyacaraṇ Vidyābhuṣaṇ, 12th year, No. 1, pp. 39-40; also, Haridāsa Dāsa, *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, Part II, p. 148.
2. *Karṇānanda*. Ch. 4, pp. 58-91. This work is considered apocryphal by some scholars.
3. *Karṇānanda*, Ch. 5, pp. 92-97.
4. *Premavilāsa*, Chs. 15, 16.
5. BRK. Chs. 4. 9.
6. *Premavilāsa*, Chs. 11, 12.

4. Śyāmānanda, perhaps the most successful and dynamic preacher of the Caitanya faith, was involved in a scandal of changing *gurus* when he was regarded as a disciple of Jīva Gosvāmin.[1]
5. Rāmacandra Kavirāja went to Vṛndāvana at least once, and was recognised as *Kavirāja* by the leading Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana.[2]
6. Govindadāsa Kavirāja, too, went to Vṛndāvana and was recognised as *Kavirāja* by Jīva Gosvāmin.[3]
7. Both Vīrabhadra and *Gopāla* Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita went to Vṛndāvana.[4]
8. Jiva Gosvāmin wrote letters containing advice, instructions, and theological explanations to Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Rāmacandra Kavirāja, and Vīra Hāmvīra. It is safe to assume that he wrote similar letters to Narottama Datta and Śyāmānanda.[5]

VI

Undoubtedly the aim of Jīva Gosvāmin was to put an end to heterodoxy in the Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal by placing over it the unifying mantle of the Vṛndāvana dogma. The leaders of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism were, no doubt, eager to unify the sub-sects. The only creed which might be partly acceptable to all groups in Bengal was the creed of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins in which the servile mood, the friendly mood, and the filial mood were properly recognised as steps towards the crescendo of *Madhurarasa*.

But perhaps no Bengali group, excepting the men who stuck to the 'friendly mood', was ready to accept the *Svakiyā* theory and *Vaidhi bhakti* as the *summum bonum* of their spiritual culture.[6] According to *Karṇānanda* even Śrīnivāsa was a believer in the *Parakiyā* theory.[7] The Śrīkhaṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas did not buzz an inch from

1. *Abhirāmalīlāmṛta*, pp. 120-123; *Premavilāsa*, p. 155.
2. BRK. Ch. 9, p. 388.
3. BRK. Ch. 11, p. 436, verses 141-149; PKT. Vol. 5, p. 80.
4. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 19, p. 343; BRK. Ch. 13, pp. 625-630, and Ch. 11, p. 439, verse 259 wherein it is stated that Jāṇhavā Devī saw in Vṛdāvana the tomb (*Samādhi*) of Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita.
5. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 14, pp, 189-193; BRK. pp. 382, 386-388, 632-634.
6. The documents of the public controversy between the supporters of the *Svakiyā* and *Parakiyā* doctrines, in which the latter won, are given in *Types of Early Bengali Prose*, ed. Śivaratan Mitra (1922), pp. 129-137.
7. *Karṇānanda*, p. 1, verse 4: "*Śrīnivāsaṃ Prabhuṃ Vande Parakiya Rasārthinaṃ*".

Gauranāgaravāda. The Vaiṣṇavas of Bāghnāpāḍā preached the *Kṛṣṇa-Rasarāja* concept and the theory of the divinity of the *Guru* which had a Sahajiyā undertone. The Śāntipur Gosvāmins practised ritualism and strengthened social conservatism. But the Nityānanda circle lost its influence and pre-eminence. After the emergence of very active and powerful leaders like Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Narottama and Śyāmānanda, who had been intensively trained in Vṛndāvana, the *Gopālas* and their 'friendly mood' became circumscribed in isolated pockets in Burdwan, Hooghly, 24 Parganas and Bīrbhūm. Even a powerful leader like Vīrabhadra had to go to Vṛndāvana in search of a new orientation.

But the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal could not forget Caitanya. The Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins casually mentioned him in their works. But the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas produced an impressive outcrop of passionate songs on Caitanya. Śrīnivāsa, Narottama and Śyāmānanda did not make any concerted attempt at bridging the widening gulf between Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya. Later it was thought that the last word on the juxtaposition of Kṛṣṇa with Caitanya had been said by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja in CCM. The failure of the Vaiṣṇava leaders to make the doctrinal adjustments made the Caitanya movement static. The Vṛndāvana dogma strengthhened asceticism and gradually created a gulf between the Vaiṣṇava ascetics and the common householders. What could make the movement once more dynamic was a synthesis between Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa. It was ultimately brought about by an ascetic of Vṛndāvana named Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābāji towards the middle of the eighteenth century. The ritualistic synthesis and its effects are discussed in Chapter 18 of this work. Ultimately, Kavi Karṇapūra's vision of Caitanya as the incarnation of God Kṛṣṇa, and of his associates as the incarnations of the associates of Kṛṣṇa, which is the subject-matter of GGD, was used as a means of effecting the compromise between Vṛndāvana and Navadvīpa. It is, therefore, erroneous to say, as Rādhāgovinda Nāth does, that a study of the GGD is not essential for spreading the religion of the "Mahāprabhu".[1]

1. *Śrīcaitanyacaritāmṛter Bhāmikā*, p. 370.

CHAPTER XIII

VAIṢṆAVISM IN BĀNKURĀ

I

Śrīnivāsa Ācārya's claim to immortality rests on his unique success in converting Vīra Hāmvīra, the Malla King of Viṣṇupur. Vaiṣṇavism had, no doubt, considerable following in Viṣṇupur even before Vīra Hāmvīra's conversion. At least two Vaiṣṇava temples were built by the Malla kings during the period of the Bengali Sultanate. In 1449 Patit Malla built the Jagannātha temple in Viṣṇupur. Vīra Malla built the Gopāla temple at the same place in 1545. The image of Veṇukṛṣṇa was sculptured on the Śaileśvara temple of Sihar which was built by Pṛthvī Malla in 1346.[1]

After Vīra Hāmvīra's conversion the Malla kings vigorously pursued the policy of spreading the Kṛṣṇa cult far and wide. Their policy produced some interesting results. The introduction, or rather the revival of Vaiṣṇavism by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya turned the tide for ever in favour of civilisation and humanity. Vaiṣṇavism deeply influenced the prevalent tribal culture of Bankura district. The local Korā tribe was 'Vaisnavised'. It began to worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.[2] A very popular tribal reform movement, known as *Śrī-dharma* movement, was initiated by the Sāntāls, Korās, Khairās, Lohārs, Māgadhīya Doms, Bāgdis and Bauris. It derived its inspiration from Vaiṣṇava liberalism. The movement emphasized the necessity of cultivating Vaiṣṇava ethics.[3] The weavers of Bankura,

1. McCutchion, *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal*, p. 2, note-4; Amiyakumār Bandyopādhyāya, *Bānkurā Jelār Purākīrti*, p. 53.
2. The Korā tribe had 2054081 members according to the Census of 1961. Vide, Das, Raichaudhuri and Raha, *Handbook on Scheduled Castes and Tribes of West Bengal*, pp. 127-129.
3. *West Bengal District Gazetteers*, *Bankura*, p. 163. See, Kstimohan Sen, "Jhārkhaṇḍe Bhaktidharmer Prabhāv" *Pravāsī* (monthly journal) B.S. 1339 (1932) Pauṣ, pp. 377-378. In some villages of Viṣṇupur, the Sāntāls hold "Caitanya-Nityānanda" festivals. There is a reference to this fact in Haridāsa Dāsa's *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. 2, pp. 167-68, See also, Surajit Sinha, "Bhumij-Kshatriya Social Movement in South Manbhum", *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, July 1959, pp. 13-15; also, Surajit Sinha, "Vaisnava Influence on a Tribal Culture" in *Krishna : Myths, Rites, And Attitudes*, ed, Milton Singer, Honolulu, 1966.

renowned for their silk-pieces, were converted into Vaiṣṇavism by lesser *Mahāntas* and ascetics. The weavers of Sonāmukhī town, for instance, were converted by Āul Manohara Dāsa, a disciple of Jāṇhavā Devī.[1]

It should be noted in this connection that Vaiṣṇavism in the western districts of Bengal radiated a reformist impulse. It deeply influenced tribal culture in the border regions of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Yuangs of Dhenkanal and Keonjhar in Orissa worship Mahaprabhu Caitanya and place offerings of fruits in select places in the surrounding jungles, which Caitanya is said to have traversed. They worship Lakṣmī, the Vaiṣṇava goddess of wealth. The Muṇḍas of Chotanagpur in Bihar sing songs on the love-life of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The Vaiṣṇava gosāins have hundreds of Muṇḍa disciples. But most of these gosāins belong to the Rāmāyet sect. The Vaiṣṇava gosāins of Sāhābad in Bihar have considerable following among the Orāons, who are vegetarians. The "Tungabhagat" movement of the Orāons is a puritanical and reformist movement which was possibly influenced by the '*Śrīdharma*' movement in Bankura.[2] According to Haridāsa Dāsa, the Sāntāls and other tribals of eastern Chotanagpur were influenced by the Caitanya movement, but the tribals of Western Chotanagpur are Rāmāyet Vaiṣṇavas.[3]

The depth of the Vaiṣṇava influence in Bankura is reflected in the following data.[4]

(1) *Vaiṣṇava Fairs held during Dol and Holi Festivals.*

Place	*Police Station*
Brajarājpur	Indpur
Rudra	Rāṇībandh
Simlāpāl	Simlāpāl
Bhālāidaha	Simlāpāl
Nandarbaṇī	Ondā
Candrakonā	Ondā

1. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. I, p. 5.
2. Nirmal Kumar Basu, *Hindu Samājer Gaḍaṇ*, pp. 1-51.
3. GVA. p. 1876.
4. *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Bankura*, pp. 205-206.

(2) *Fairs held during the Rāsa Festival.*

Place	*Police Station*
Viṣṇupur Town	Viṣṇupur Town
Tiljhātkā	Gangājalghāti
Sābrākon	Taldāngra

(3) *Fairs held during the Rathayātrā Festival.*

Viṣṇupur Town[1]

II

The spread of the Vaiṣṇava movement in Bankura-Viṣṇupur formed the background of a brilliant architectural and sculptural efflorescence which formed an essential part of the glorious Vaiṣṇava culture of Bengal. The leaders of this efflorescence were the Malla kings and queens of Viṣṇupur.[2] The remains of nearly sixty-four Vaiṣṇava temples, built throughout Bankura between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, have been studied by Amiyakumar Banerjee and David McCutchion. Of these temples twenty-three were built in Viṣṇupur town and the adjoining areas. Raghunāth Siṃha I, Vīra Hāmvīra's successor, built numerous Vaiṣṇava temples in many distant villages in order to make Vaiṣṇava religion popular with the tribal population of the villages.

Temple-building in Bankura was one of the methods of spreading Vaiṣṇavism in a region which was a notable centre of Jainism, Dharma and Manasā cults. Jaina remains have been found in Jāmkundī (Pātrasāyar Police Station), Jordā (Indpur Police Station), Deulbhiḍyā (Tāldāngra Police Station), Dhārāpāt (Viṣṇupur Police Station), Pareshnath (Rāṇibandh Police Station), Madanpur (Sonāmukhī Police Station), Sālda (Jaipur Police Station) and Sonāmukhī town.[3] The history of the early percolation of Vaiṣṇavism into a

1. Field studies of the fairs and festivals of Bankura district, in *Paścim Banger Pūjā Pārvan O Melā*, Vol. IV, ed. Ashoke Mitra (Delhi, 1974). The studies include accounts of, or references to, seventy-two Vaiṣṇava fairs and festivals.
2. According to one authority, "there is a tradition that the Rajas of Bishnupur are Bagdis by caste". The same authority is of opinion that "the real civilisation of Vishuupur begins with the introduction (or rather revival) of Vaishnavism". Abhayapada Mallik, *History of Bishnupur Raj*, pp. 18, 27.
3. Amiyakumār Bandyopādhyāya, *Bankurā Jelār Purākīrti*, pp. 28, 50-51, 52, 56-57, 58, 61-62.

region, where Jainism was very strong, is yet to be written. But there is no doubt about the fact that the Vaiṣṇava kings of Viṣṇupur made a special effort to spread Vaiṣṇava worship in Bānkurā by building temples in which Vaiṣṇava deities were installed. McCutchion gives a descriptive list of no less than thirteen main variations of the late mediaeval temples of Bengal which evolved throughout Bengal during the Sultanate and early Mughal rule. These were : *Rekha, Pirhā, Bānglā, Chālā, Ratna, Domed, Spired, Octagonal, Flat-roofed, Porched, Manca, Rāsamanca* and *Anomalous Combinations*.[1] These main types had fifty-three variants. The Vaiṣṇava kings of Viṣṇupur patronised the evolution of the *Viṣṇupuri* style. The use of laterite made the temples more lasting and massive than the older brick-built temples. The Viṣṇupur style was characterised by the *Ekaratna* or the unispired temple. Terracota sculpture was also developed in a big way in Viṣṇupur.

Late mediaeval terracota art in Bengal was deeply leavened with Vaiṣṇavism. This art was basically Vaiṣṇava art. The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legend became the favourite subject of the unknown terracota artists. In magnificent detail, marked by wonderful variegation, they sculptured the following subjects :

The legend of Kṛṣṇa's birth.
The destruction of tyrant Kaṃsa by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.
The killing of Putanā, the demoness, by Kṛṣṇa, the suckling babe.
The subjugation of the hydra-headed and monstrous snake Kāliya by adolescent Kṛṣṇa.
The charming pranks of Kṛṣṇa, the toddler.
The games of Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd.
The various aspects of Kṛṣṇa's amours.
The ten incarnations of Viṣṇu.
The principal legends of the Rāmāyaṇa, including the exploits of Hanumāna.

1. McCutchion, op. cit. pp. 17-19. This contradicts the view of Tapan Raychaudhuri that "the record of Bengali temple architecture (during the Mughal period) is also very poor". *Bengal Under Akbar and Jahangir*, p. 185.

Laterite architecture and terracota sculpture grew archetypal in Bānkurā after Vīra Hāmvira's conversion by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya. Viṣṇupur has the distinction of being a small sub-divisional town full of mediaeval temples and tanks. A check-list of the Vaiṣṇava temples of Viṣṇupur is given below :[1]

VAIṢṆAVA TEMPLES OF VIṢṆUPUR

Date	*Name of the Temple*	*Founder*	*Style*
1643	Śyāmarāya	Raghunātha Simha I	5-pinnacled. Brick.
1655	Kṛṣṇarāya	Raghunātha Simha I	*Jor Bāngla*. Laterite.
1656	Kālācānd	Raghunātha Simha I	Unipinnacled. Laterite.
1658	Lālji	Vīrasimha II	Unipinnacled. Laterite.
1659	Rādhāvinoda	Raghunātha Simha	*Ātcālā*.
1665	Madanagopāla	Queen Śiromaṇi	5-pinnacled. Laterite.
1665	Madanagopāla	Queen Cuḍāmaṇi	Unipinnacled. Laterite.
1687	Rādhāramaṇa	Associated with the name of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya.	*Ātcālā*. Brick.
1694	Madanamohana	Durjana Simha	Unipinnacled. Brick.
1726	Jorāmandir	Gopāla Simha	Unipinnacled. Laterite.
1729	Rādhāgovinda	Kṛṣṇasimha	Unipinnacled. Laterite.
1734	Mahāprabhu	Gopāla Simha	*Jorabānglā. Ātcāla.* Laterite.
1737	Rādhāmādhava	Queen Cuḍāmaṇi	Unipinnacled. Laterite.
1758	Rādhāśyāma	Caitanyasimha	Unipinnacled. Laterite.
1800	Rādhākṛṣṇa	—	Unipinnacled. Laterite.
—	Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma	—	*Rekha*. Brick.
—	Kiśorarāya	—	*Rekha*. Brick. Twin.
—	Nikunjabihāri	—	*Rekha*. Brick. Temple
18th.c.	Nandalāla	—	Unipinnacled. Laterite.
19th.c.	Śrīdhara	Basu Family	9-pinnacled.
A.D.1600?	Rāsamanca	Vīra Hāmvīra	Sandstone.
17th.c.	Rāsamanca	—	Now ruined.

Vaiṣṇava temples were also built in the following villages of the Bānkurā district :

Temple:	*Village*	*Police Station*
Jādava Rāya. A.D.1650.	Jādavnagar.	Viṣṇupur Town.
Rādhākṛṣṇa Temple. A.D.1672.	Tejpāl.	Viṣṇupur Town.

1. The data have been collected from the works of McCutchion and Amiyakumār Bandyopādhyāya, op. cit.

Temple:	*Village*	*Police Station*
Rādhākānta. A.D.1678.	Maṇinagar.	Viṣṇupur Town.
Śyāmacandra. A.D.1694-1704	Dharāpāt.	Viṣṇupur Town.
Rāsamanca. A.D.1800 ?	Ayodhyā.	Viṣṇupur Town.
Vṛndāvanacandra. A.D.1638.	Bīrsingha.	Pātrasāyer
Gokulacandra. A.D.1643.	Gokulnagar.	Jaypur.
Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa. A.D.1652.	Balsi.	Pātrasāyer.
Gopāla Temple. A.D.1653-54.	Vikrampur.	Ondā.
Śyāmcānd. A.D.1660.	Baitāl.	Jaipur.
Madanamohana. A.D.1670.	Rānīāḍā.	Gangājalghāti.
Rāmkṛṣṇa. ?	Sābrākon.	Tāldāngrā.
Śyāmasundara. A.D.1600.	Madanpur.	Sonāmukhī.
Rādhākṛṣṇa. ?	Maithā-Gopināthpur.	Bānkurā Town.
Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa. ?	Metyālā.	Gangājalghāti.
Balarāma, ?	Simlāpāl.	Simlāpāl.
Śyāmasundara. ?	Elyāti.	Ondā.
Rādhāmohana ?	Ghutgutiyā.	Barjorā.

III

An important result of the spread of Vaiṣṇavism in Viṣṇupur was the evolution of a distinct school of classical music, which is known as *Viṣṇupur Gharānā*. The school first developed during the reign of Raghunātha Siṃha I (1626-1655), the builder of numerous Vaiṣṇava temples. Its first exponent was one Bāhādur Sen, who claimed relationship with Tānsen, the celebrated court-musician of Akbar. It was further developed during the reign of Raghunātha Siṃha II (1694-1730). The characteristic development of this school was *Dhruvapada* which earned respectability throughout northern India. The *Viṣṇupur Gharānā* was patronised by leading *Rājās* and *Zamindars* of West Bengal. But *Dhruvapada* was distinctly classical, and it hardly influenced the four styles of *Kīrtana* which developed during the sixteenth century. The link of the *Viṣṇupur Gharānā* with the school of Tānsen or *Senī Gharānā* is a subject of controversy.[1]

1. Rājyeśvar Mitra, *Bānglār Gītikār*, pp. 30-34; Suniti Kumār Chatterjee, "The Music School of Viṣṇupur", *Modern Review*, Calcutta, 1933, p. 348. Abhayapada Mallik, op. cit., pp. 110-114. Mallik gives the following sequence of the musical masters and their disciples: Bāhādur Khān, Gadādhar Cakravartī, Kṛṣṇamohan Goswāmī, Rāmśankar Bhattācārya, Kṣetramohan Goswāmī, Anantalāl Banerji, Gopeśwar Banerji. *History of Bishnupur Raj*, pp. 110-114.

Vaiṣṇavism also inspired the local artists, who developed a particular type of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa painting towards the beginning of the eighteenth century. These old paintings were collected for the Vangiya Sāhitya Pariṣat by Byomkesh Mustāfi, who exhibited them for the first time in Calcutta in 1906. The paintings were produced on "hard", hand-made paper.[1]

In Viṣṇupur, even card-playing was influenced by Vaiṣṇavism. The so-called *Daśāvatāra* cards were invented. These cards, one hundred twenty in number, were divided into ten bunches according to ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. The pattern of the game is described by Mallik.[2]

1. Rākhāldās Bandyopādhyāya, "Dakṣin-Paścim Banger Śilpa", *Pravāsi* (1929) Māgha, 1336, pp. 563-573. Bandyopādhyāya remarks that none of the contemporary art-historians of Bengal noted the existence of these sophisticated *Kṛṣṇalīlā* paintings of Bengal.
2. Mallik, op. cit., pp. 125-126.

CHAPTER XIV

NAROTTAMA DATTA AND THE KHETURI FESTIVAL

I

The importance of Narottama Datta in the history of the post-Caitanya Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal can hardly be overestimated. He worked in unison with Śrīnivāsa Ācārya for the establishment of the Vṛndāvana dogma in Bengal. He was one of the principal organisers of the Kheturi festival in which the Vṛndāvana viewpoint finally dominated over the other sectarian dogmas. Narottama Datta and his disciples boldly flouted caste. Narottama was an eminent Śūdra-*guru* of many Brāhmaṇas. He and his disciples spread Vaiṣṇavism in Murshidābād and Rājshāhi. Narottama was also the author of several works in which his spiritual ideals were clearly stated. So great was his authority that even the deviant Sahajīyās found it expedient to write some of their sectarian works in his name.

II

Narottama Datta was the son of Kṛṣṇānanda Datta, who was the *Rājā* of Gopālpur near Kheturi in Rājshāhi, now in Bangladesh. Kheturi is thirteen miles west of Rājshāhi town and situated on the Padmā river.[1] Narottama's uncle Puruṣottama Datta was a minister of the Bengal Sultanate. There is some confusion with regard to the relative ages of the brothers Kṛṣṇānanda and Puruṣottama.[2] According to Śiśir Kumār Ghosh Narottama was born a few years before Caitanya's death.[3]

Early in life Narottama was profoundly influenced by a Vaiṣṇava Brāhmaṇa named Kṛṣṇadāsa. His father and uncle were acquainted

1. L.S.S.O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers. Rājshāhī*, pp. 164-65.
2. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 20, p. 352, refers to Kṛṣṇānanda Datta as the younger brother of Puruṣottama Datta. But in *Narottamavilāsa*, Ch. 3, p. 36, Puruṣottama Datta is described as the younger brother of Kṛṣṇānanda Datta.
3. *Śrī Narottamacarita*, p. 13.

with Mukunda Sarkār and Narahari Sarkār of Śrīkhaṇḍa. A Kṛṣṇa-worshipper even in early youth, Narottama took the vow of celibacy, but did not renounce the world.[1] Much against the wish of his parents and uncle Narottama went to Vṛndāvana. There he became the disciple of Lokanātha Gosvāmin.[2] He lived in Vṛndāvana nearly for a year. He was introduced to Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Śyāmānanda. He returned to Bengal with them. When the two cartloads of manuscripts they had brought to Bengal were burgled by Vīra Hāmvīra's men, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya requested Narottama and Śyāmānanda to pursue their respective missions. Narottama followed Śrīnivāsa's advice, sent Śyāmānanda to Kālnā, and himself came back to his native village. Meanwhile Santoṣa Datta, his cousin-brother, had become the *Rājā* of Kheturi-Gopālpur. Narottama promptly converted him.[3] Very soon he established contact with different Vaiṣṇava groups. From Kheturi he first went to Navadvīpa, whence he moved to Māyāpur. From Māyāpur he went to Śāntipur. He visited Kālnā, Saptagrāma, Khānākul-Kṛṣṇanagar and Khaḍadaha. He met Advaita's eldest son Acyutānanda, *Gopāla* Rāmadāsa Abhirāma, and Jāṇhavā Devī. From Khaḍadaha he went to Purī where he lived for sometime. He came back to Bengal and met Śrīnivāsa in Yājīgrāma, the Vaiṣṇavas of Kātwā, and the followers of Narahari Sarkār in Śrīkhaṇḍa. There was a definite purpose behind the unceasing movement from place to place. Narottama thus cultivated acquaintance with the Vaiṣṇava leaders of Bengal. Just afterwards, in 1580 or thereabouts, Narottama, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Rāmacandra Kavirāja chalked out the plan of holding a big festival in Kheturi.[4]

The policy of consolidating the Caitanya order through the holding of festivals had perhaps been formulated by the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. There was scarcely any financial problem. Money for the festivals was supplied by affluent disciples like the king of

1. *Narottamavilāsa*, Ch. 2, pp. 15-16.
2. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 10, pp. 106-110, Ch. 11, p. 116.
3. BRK. Ch. 7, pp. 344 ff.
4. *Na ottamavilāsa*, Ch. 3; BRK, Ch. 8, pp. 362-377.

Viṣṇupur, the ruler of Śikharabhūmi, the Vaiṣṇava landlords, and the rich *Vaṇik* disciples of Nityānanda. Narottama visited Saptagrāma presumably to secure the assistance of the local merchants. Śrīnivāsa had already set a good example of holding such festivals. He had been able to form a consensus in favour of the Vṛndāvana dogma with the help of the Vaiṣṇavas of Śrīkhaṇḍa and Kātwā. The ground for the big festival of Kheturi had already been prepared with meticulous care. The planning for it, clear indications of which are discernible in the unending movement of Jāṇhavā Devī, Śrīnivāsa, and Narottama, was indeed a new and dynamic development in the post-Caitanya Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal. But the idea of holding festivals was perhaps derived from Nityānanda's historic *Ciḍāmahotsava*.

III

The big Vaiṣṇava festival was held in Kheturi for several reasons.[1] It would have been relatively easy for the Vaiṣṇavas of East and North Bengal to attend the festival if it was held in Kheturi. The planners of the festival certainly attached some importance to the prospect of a necessary liaison with them. It was really necessary for the leaders of the Caitanya movement to build up bases in North Bengal and East Bengal. It was expected that the festival would serve the purpose of an assault on the locally prominent Śākta cult. In *Narottamavilāsa* there is a vivid description of the barbarous behaviour of the local Tāntrikas. They immolated human beings on the altar of the goddess. They raped virgins. And they created a reign of terror.[2]

Fifty messengers were sent to different parts of Bengal. Innu-

1. Rasikānanda, the chief disciple of Śyāmānanda of Midnapur, is said to have attended that festival. According to RM (pp. 17, 185-187) Rasikānanda was born in 1590 and died at the age of sixty-two. From these dates it is possible to argue that the Kheturi festival might have been held between the years 1610 and 1620. Śyāmānanda died in 1630. See, *Śrīkhaṇḍer Prācīn Vaiṣṇava*, Appendix; RM, p. 138.
2. *Narottamavilāsa*, Ch. 7, p. 89 : *Keha Keha Manuṣyera Kāṭā Muṇḍa Laiyā/ Khaḍgakare Karaye Nartana Matta Haiyā.//* etc.

merable letters of invitation were despatched. *Rājā* Santoṣa Datta built many cottages for the accommodation of the guests, made arrangements for their safe transportation across the broad expanse of the Padmā river, and stored provisions for them. The devout *Rājā* and his men laboured very hard to make the festival a grand success. The following groups of Vaiṣṇavas attended the festival.[1]

1. *The Vaiṣṇavas of Khaḍadaha led by Jāṇhavā Devī.*

1. Caitanyadāsa of Navadvīpa-Bāghnāpārā. Son of Vaṃśīvadana Catta.
2. Dāmodara. He attended the Kātwā festival. BRK. p. 394.
3. Gaurānga. CCM, p. 137, Nityānanda branch.
4. Hṛdayacaitanya. Disciple of Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita and *guru* of Śyāmānanda.
5. Jāṇhavā Devī.
6. Jagaddurlabha. Son of Vīrabhadra.
7. Jñānadāsa. Celebrated Vaiṣṇava poet.
8. Jīva Paṇḍita. GGD. p. 46, verse 169.
9. Kamalākara Piplāi. *Gopāla* of Māhesh.
10. Kānāi Paṇḍita. BRK. p. 394. He attended the Kātwā festival.
11. Kṛṣṇadāsa. BRK. p. 393. He attended the Kātwā festival. He might have been Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa, *Gopāla* of Ākāihāt.
12. Kṛṣṇadāsa Sarkhel. Uncle of Jāṇhavā Devī.
13. Mādhavācārya. Husband of Gangā Devī, Nityānanda's daughter.
14. Manohara. CCM. p. 137. Nityānanda branch.
15. Mahīdhara. CCM. p. 139. Nityānanda branch.
16. Mīnaketana Rāmadāsa. CCM. p. 137. Nityānanda branch.
17. Murāricaitanya. CCM. p. 136. Nityānanda branch.
18. Mukunda. VAD. p. 343.
19. Nakaḍi. CCM. p. 137. Nityānanda branch.
20. Nayana Bhāskara. Noted sculptor of Hālisahar, 24 Parganas.
21. Nṛsiṃhacaitanya. CCM. p. 137. Nityānanda branch.
22. Parameśvara Dāsa. *Gopala* of Tarā-Ātpur.
23. Raghupati Vaidya Upādhyāya. CCM. 1.136. Nityānanda branch.
24. Raghunātha Ācārya. Son of Khanja Bhagavān Ācārya, of Gosvāmī-Mālīpāḍā, Hooghly.
25. Śankara. CCM. p. 128. Caitanya branch.
26. Sūryadāsa. Was he Sūryadāsa Sarkhel, Jāṇhavā Devī's father? Nanīgopāl Gosvāmi thinks that he was the lady's father. Vide, Nanīgopāl Gosvāmi, *Caitanyottarayuge Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava*, pp. 47-53.

1. These names are found in *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 19, pp. 308-309; *Narottamavilāsa*, pp. 101, 106-108, 112; BRK. pp. 411, 417-430.

27. Balarāma Dāsa, or Nityānanda Dāsa, Jāṇhavā's disciple, and said to be the author of *Premavilāsa*.
28. Vṛndāvana Dāsa. Author of CBH.
29. Other numerous *Vaṇik*-disciples of Nityānanda.

2. *Vaiṣṇavas of Nadiā* (Navadvīpa)

30. Mādhavācārya. Nephew of Viṣṇupriyā Devī, Caitanya's wife.
31. Śrīnidhi. Brother of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita.
32. Śrīpati. Another brother of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita.

3. *Vaiṣṇavas of Śāntipur*

33. Acyutānanda. Eldest son of Advaita Ācārya.
34. Banamālī.
35. Gopāla Ācārya. Another son of Advaita Ācārya.
36. Janārdana.
37. Kānu Paṇḍita.
38. Kāmadeva.
39. Nārāyaṇa Dāsa.
40. Puruṣottama. Possibly Puruṣottama Nāgara.
41. Viṣṇudāsa Ācārya. Influential disciple of Advaita Ācārya.

4. *Vaiṣṇavas of Burdwan and Murshidabad*

42. Bhagavān Kavirāj. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya's disciple.
43. Candra Hāldār.
44. Devīdāsa. Famous *Mṛdanga*-artist.
45. Divyasiṃha. Son of Govindadāsa Kavirāja.
56. Dvija Rāmakṛṣna.
47. Govindadāsa Kavirāja. Celebrated Vaiṣṇava poet, and brother of Rāmacandra Kavirāja.
48. Gopāladāsa of Budhuipāḍā, Murshidabad.
49. Gokula of Kāncangariā, Murshidabad.
50. Gaurāngadāsa.
51. Gokuladāsa. Narottama's disciple.
52. Gokula, of Shergarh, Pāncet.
53. Kṛṣṇavallabha.
54. Karṇapūra. Disciple of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, and resident of village Bāhādurpur.
55. Kavicandra.
56. Kṛṣṇadāsa of Ākāihāt, possibly Kālākṛṣṇadāsa, the *Gopāla*.
57. Kṛṣṇānanda Majumdār.
58. Kumuda.
59. Locana Dāsa, author of *Caitanyamangala*.
60. Mangala Thākura of Bīrbhūm. He belonged to the Gadādhara Paṇḍita branch.

61. Mitu Hāldār.
62. Nārāyaṇa Kavi.
63. Nimāi Kavirāj.
64. Premānanda.
65. Raghunandana, nephew of Narahari Sarkār of Śrīkhaṇḍa.
66. Rūpa Kavirāja.
67. Rāmacaraṇa. Śrīnivāsa's brother-in-law and disciple.
68. Rūpa Ghataka. Affluent disciple of Śrīnivāsa.
69. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya.
70. Sanjaya.
71. Śubhānanda.
72. Ṣaṣṭhīvara. A *Mahānta* and noted *Kīrtana* singer.
73. Vyāsācārya. Court Scholar of Viṣṇupur; Śrīnivāsa Ācārya's disciple.
74. Vaṃśīdhara.
75. Vallabhadāsa.
76. Vallabhīkānta Kavirāja. Disciple of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya.
77. Yadunandana of Kātwā.

5. *Vaiṣṇavas of Midnāpur.*

78. Rasikānanda, chief disciple of Śyāmānanda.
79. Śyāmānanda. Leader of the Midnāpur Vaiṣṇavas.

6. *Important Mahāntas and Vaiṣṇavas.*

80. Bāṇīnātha Vipra.
81. Caitanyadāsa. Was he Vīra Hāmvīra, king of Viṣṇupur?
82. Hari Ācārya. A disciple of Rāmacandra Kavirāja. Resident of Goās village in Murshidabad.
83. Jagannātha. He was known as *Kāṣṭhakātā*, the wood-cutter. He was a disciple of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. He came to Kheturi from Vikrampur Parganā in the Munshiganj sub-division of Dacca.
84. Jīta Miśra.
85. Kavi Karṇapūra. He was presumably the noted Bengali theologian and poet, the author of GGD, the biographies of Caitanya, *Alaṃkāra-kaustubha*, *Ānandavṛndāvanacampū*, etc.
86. Kaśīnātha Paṇḍita.
87. Lakṣmīkānta Paṇḍita.
88. Nartaka Gopāla.
89. Nayanānanda. Poet of the "Gadāi-Gaurānga" sub-sect.
90. Puṣpagopāla.
91. Raghu Miśra.
92. Raghunātha. Youngest son of Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, the *Gopāla* of Kālnā.
93. Uddhava. Possibly Śyāmānanda's disciple.
94. Śivānanda. Was he Śivānanda Sena, father of Kavi Karṇapūra?
95. Vallabha. Grandson of Vaṃśīvadana Catta of Navadvīpa.

IV

Almost all of the *Mahāntas* who had attended the earlier festivals in Kātwā and Śrīkhaṇḍa participated in the Kheturi festival. For some unstated reasons Vīrabhadra did not attend it, but his son Jagaddurlabha did. Only two *Gopālas*, or possibly three, attended Jt. The other *Gopālas* were either no more when the festival was held, or were unwilling to attend it. The Kheturi festival was held with a view to propagating the Vṛndāvana dogma. But Vṛndāvana is not known to have sent to it any delegate. Only three important Vaiṣṇavas of East Bengal were invited to attend the festival. They were Puruṣottama Nāgara, 'wood-cutter' Jagannātha, and Puṣpagopāla.

The following programme was adopted for the festival :[1]

1. Installation of the stone-image of Caitanya.
2. Installation of the images of Vallabhīkānta, Vrajamohana, Śrīkṛṣṇa, Rādhākānta and Rādhāmohana.
3. Singing of *Kīrtana*.
4. Sprinkling of coloured mica-power (*phāgu*).
5. Observation of Caitanya's birth-day.
6. Holding of community feasts.
7. Finalisation of the arrangements for the year-long recitation of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, CBH, and CCM.

Kheturi was selected as the permanent venue of annual Vaiṣṇava gatherings and festivals. In Kheturi the Vṛndāvana dogma was finally accepted as the unalterable Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava creed. Caitanya was indeed worshipped as a God. But the significant point was that Nityānanda and Advaita were consigned to the limbo. Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa were worshipped "according to the rituals delineated in the works of Rūpa Gosvāmin".[2] The Caitanya-idol was worshipped according to the twin-*mantra* (*yugalamantra*) of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and

1. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 14, pp. 203-207; Ch. 19, pp. 305-306; 310-311; *Narottamavilāsa*, pp. 88-128; BRK Ch. 10, pp. 421-429.
2. *Narottamavilāsa*, p. 91 : *Śrīrūpa Gosvāmīkṛta Granthādi Vidhāne/ Karilā Sakala Kṛiyā Ati Sāvadhāne.//*

with the recitation of the ten syllables of *Gopālamantra*.[1] This was done in accordance with the instructions of the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. The Kheturi congregation recognised the validity of two theories. The first was the theory of the embodiment of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugality in Caitanya.[2] The second theory was that of Kṛṣṇa's incarnation as Caitanya. Caitanya's birth-day was observed as Kṛṣṇa's birth-day. Anybody who tried to distinguish between the identities of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya was loaded with a terrible curse.[3] The *smaraṇamangala* formula was followed during the worship of the idols.[4] The proceedings noted above were followed by a night-long debate, the details of which are not stated.[5] But ultimately the theological domination of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins remained indisputable. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya is reported to have told Narottama that three new Vaiṣṇava centres (linked by their common allegiance to Vṛndāvana) had evolved in Bengal, surpassing the other Vaiṣṇava centres, at least in relative importance. These new centres were Kheturi, Yājīgrāma and Viṣṇupur.[6]

The first Kheturi festival created a trend in *Kīrtana* music which was known as *Garāṇhāti* or *Garerhāti* mode of *Kīrtana*. The *Garerhāti* style, named after the Parganā Garerhāt, to which Kheturi belonged, was the *Kīrtana* approximation of the classical *Dhruvapada* of North Indian music. The most significant feature of the style

1. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 19, p. 312 : "...*Tiha Kahe Gosvāmigaṇer Ājnā Anusāre/ Rādhākṛṣṇa Yugala Mantre Pūjinu Caitanyere// Daśākṣara Gopālamantre Tāra Pūjāra Vidhāna/ Caitanya Pūjite Ājnā Kare Gosvāmīra Gaṇa.//*
2. *Premavilāsa*, p. 312 : *Śrīrādhāra Bhāve Magna Śrīgaurāngacandra/ Sei Bhāvera Gīta Gāyā Pāiyā Ānanda.//*
3. Ibid., p. 314 : *Śrīkṛṣṇera Janmayātrā-vidhi Anusāre/ Pūjaye Gaurāngacānd Hariṣa Antare.// Kṛṣṇa Gaura Eka Ebe Bheda Buddhi Yāra/ Se Jāya Narake Tāra Nāhika Nistāra.//*
4. Ibid., p. 317 : *Aṣtakālīna Śrīsevāra Vidhimate/ Nityasevā Kare Tiha Ānandita Cite.//*
5. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 14, p. 206 : *Se Rātri Vasilā Save Kṛṣṇakathārase/ Keha Kahe Purvapakṣa Kariyā Viśeṣe.//*
6. Ibid., p. 207 : *Ekadina Ei Mane Haila Eka Rīti/ Thākura Kahaye Mahāśaya Prati.// Tin Ghar Haila Tāhā Kahiye Viśeṣe/ Khetari Yājīgrāma Viṣṇupura Tina Deśa.//*

was *Gauracandrikā*.[1] The *Kīrtana* on the sports of Kṛṣṇa was prefaced by singing of songs on the *līlā* of Gaurānga in Navadvīpa. This particular fashion was *Gaurancandrikā*, which became the accepted custom in all other evolving *Kīrtana* styles. *Gauracandrikā* and Caitanya worship in Kheturi signified a realistic attitude of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins and their Bengali supporters towards the deification of Caitanya in Bengal. But the problem was created by the *smaraṇamangala* time-schedule. The time-schedule prescribed for the sports of Kṛṣṇa could not be easily adopted for those of Gaurānga in Navadvīpa. The problem was solved by Duhkhi Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābāji. The *Gauracandrikā* possibly signified a concession to the *Gauranāgara* Vaiṣṇavas or the *Gaurapāramya* theologians who believed in the primacy of Caitanya. But the so-called "Gadāi-Gaurānga" sub-sect remained unhonoured, because the theory of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugality in Caitanya militated against the idea that Gadādhara Paṇḍita was the incarnation of Rādhā.

The stupendous labour of Jāṇhavā Devī, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Narottama Datta ultimately resulted in the dominance of the Vṛndāvana versions over the prevalent mystic and deviant ideas. This development certainly made the Caitanya movement in Bengal cohesive and disciplined. But *bhakti* became self-centred to a considerable extent. It gradually lost its collective characteristics. After the Kheturi festival *bhakti* became deeply rooted in what a foreign student of Indian culture describes as "dependent psychology".[2] That there was possibly a connection between the development of this psychology and the leadership of the aristocratic elements in the Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal may be stated as a cliche. But it is very difficult to identify the exact methods adopted by the Vaiṣṇava leaders to plug the collective effusion of *bhakti* which was perhaps the most prominent feature of the religious movement launched by Caitanya in Navadvīpa.

1. Sukumar Sen argues that *Gaḍāṇhāti Kīrtana* evolved in the Gaḍānhātā area of North Calcutta in the eighteenth century. But his arguments lack the strength of incontestable evidence. Sen, "Śavdavidyār Āncaḍe Kalkātār Skeleton" *Ānandabāzār Patrikā*, May 30, 1982.
2. Richard Lannoy, *The Speaking Tree*, p. 209.

After the Kheturi festival, the works of the gosvāmins were regarded as sacred and inviolable. Any idea which militated against the evidence in the so-called *Gosvāmiśāstra* or gosvāmi-scriptures was deemed heretical. Heresy developed towards the middle of the sixteenth century particularly in Rāḍa country.[1]

V

Narottama Datta had the distinction of being a theologian and a poet. More than thirty works, dealing with Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology, Sahajiyā doctrines, and even black magic, were attributed to his authorship.[2] Sixty-four songs of Narottama Datta were collected in PKT anthology. *Prārthanā* and *Premabhakticandrikā* are the two famous compositions of Narottama.[3] These two works deal with Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology. Lucid statements of the Vṛndāvana viewpoint are found in them. They provide the reader with an opportunity to understand the stresses and strains, compromises and refutations, which doubtless characterised the efforts of men like Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Narottama Datta.

Prārthanā, consisting of two hundred and fifty-eight verses arranged in fifty-five sections in *Bṛhatbhaktitattvasāra* (ed. Rādhānātha Kābāsī) deal with the following main subjects :[4]

Prayers.
Self-criticism.

1. Vṛndāvana Dāsa clearly mentions the heretical groups in CBH, "Ādikhaṇḍa", pp. 85-86. See also, *Premavilāsa*, ed. Yaśodālāl Tālukdār, Ch. 24, pp. 246-249. The Vaiṣṇava heretics were Cuḍādhārī, Mādhava, Kapīndrī, Viṣṇudāsa, and Vāsudeva. They were also mentioned in *Gauragaṇacandrikā* of Viśvanātha Cakravartī; See verses, quoted in *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 24, pp. 248-249.
2. These writings are mentioned by Sukumar Sen, *Bāngalā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 455, Part II, p. 49; Pancānan Maṇḍal, *Puthi Paricaya*, Vol. I, pp. 12, 38, 47, 64, 86; Vol. 2, pp. 15, 35, 99, 247; Vol. 3, pp. 180, 281, 411-12.
3. See, Rādhānātha Kābāsī, ed. *Bṛhatbhaktitattvasāra*, "Prārthanā", pp. 106-276; "Premabhakticandrikā", pp. 290-484.
4. These subjects are arranged in Haridāsa Dāsa's *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, Part II, p. 24.

Mental Training.
Agony of the Soul.
The superiority of Vaiṣṇavism and the Vaiṣṇavas.
The spirītual aspirations of a Vaiṣṇava.
Relation between a *Guru* and his disciple.
The desirability of a permanent residence in Vṛndāvana.
The excellence of Vaiṣṇava asceticism.
The limitations and frailties of a Vaiṣṇava.

Perhaps the most important feature of *Prārthana* is its overwhelming emphasis on *manjarī*-status. This is the subject matter of twenty-seven sections.[1] In numerous verses of these sections there is a soul-stirring prayer for *manjarī*-status in Vṛndāvana. After his initiation Narottama was known as *Vilāsamanjarī*.[2] But as he was compelled by certain circumstances to live in Kheturi, he always wanted to go back to Vṛndāvana and live in the holy spot as a *manjarī*-worshipper of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. In many of these verses Rūpa Gosvāmin is described as *Rūpamanjarī*, the chief maid of Rādhā, who had the power to act as the guardian angel of all other *manjarīs*. In these verses Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa look far more important than Navadvīpa and Caitanya. Emphasis was laid on the high ecclesiastical status of Rūpa Gosvāmin. The functions of a *manjarī*, (guided by Rūpamanjarī), were those of a maid-servant whose sole aim was to serve Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, and who derived a mystic and indefinable joy from her selfless dedication. The *manjarī* was a great devotee and ascetic who was immortal, unsullied by worldly desires and untouched by the joys and sorrows of life in this world. The *manjarī*-theme in *Prārthanā*, however, lacks variegation. But in the context of the prevailing trends of Vaiṣṇava spiritualism in Bengal, *manjarī* was doubtless a new and attractive idea which was fully exploited by the contemporary and later *Padavalī* composers. Rāyaśekhara, for instance, who belonged to the Śrīkhaṇḍa group, conceived of himself as a *manjarī* who helped

1. Sections (as arranged in *Bṛhatbhaktitattvasāra*) : 20-34, 37, 44, 47-55.
2. Śiśirkumār Ghosh, *Śrīnarottamacarita*, p. 33.

Rādhā cook an appetising meal for Kṛṣṇa.[1] The sexual undertone of the *manjarī* theme, coupled with Narottama's intense hankering after the *manjarī*-status, perhaps encouraged the Sahajiyās to misunderstand him. They brazenly attributed the authorship of some of their works to Narottama.[2] But there can be no doubt about Narottama's asceticism and celibacy. An ascetical Vaiṣṇava order, known as *Vāmakaupīnasaṃpradāya*, which had a base in Sylhet, regarded Narottama as its founding father.[3]

Narottama habitually pays his obeisance to Caitanya, Nityānanda, Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Narahari Sarkār.[4] He sees no difference between Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya, Vṛndāvana and Navadvīpa.[5] But he does not say how could a Vaiṣṇava simultaneously contemplate the eternal sports of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya. An entire section is devoted to the extolling of the virtues of Nityānanda.[6] But the 'friendly mood' is scarcely emphasized. Advaita, Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Narahari Sarkār are rather perfunctorily saluted by this outstanding leader of the Kheturi festival. Obeisance is paid to Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Rāmacandra Kavirāja, whose death Narottama laments.[7] In many sections the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana are extolled to the skies. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja is mentioned twice.[8] The extolling of the spiritual qualities of the old gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana indicates a conscious attempt to place them above the contemporary leaders of Bengal. But in fairness to Narottama it must be said that he makes much of Vaiṣṇavism, the Vaiṣṇava *guru*, and the Vaiṣṇavas in general. To him Vaiṣṇavism is the *summum bonum* of religious idealism. The Vaiṣṇava *guru* is the best of the religious

1. *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, ed. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, p. 332 : *Rohinī Sahite/ Randhana Karite/ Vasilā Rājāra Jhi/ Sava Sakhīgaṇa/ Jogāya Jogāna/ Śekhara Jogāya Ghi./*
2. See, Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 49.
3. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. 2, p. 255, see "Rāmānanda Dāsa Bābāji Mahāśaya".
4. *Prārthanā* : sections 1, 5, 7, 10-14, 16, 38.
5. Ibid., 4 songs of section 13.
6. Ibid., section 11.
7. *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, op. cit., p. 544.
8. *Prārthanā* : Sections 1, 2. 4, 14-16, 35, 37-43.

preceptors, regardless of caste. In an age when women in general had an inferior social status, Narottama wanted to be reborn as a woman in Vṛndāvana![1] This passionate adoration of Vaiṣṇavism and the Vaiṣṇavas reflected the growing incompatibility between Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and the non-Vaiṣṇava cults. It also indicated an attempt on the part of such Vaiṣṇava leaders as Narottama Datta to bring about sectarian cohesion.

Narottama composed *Premabhakticandrikā*[2] probably after the first Kheturi festival and the death of his friend Rāmacandra Kavirāja.[3] The fundamental concepts of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, as formulated by the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins, are elucidated in the work.[4]

Narottama begins this work with the exposition of the necessity of the *guru*'s intermediacy between the devotee and Kṛṣṇa.[5] He advises the individual Vaiṣṇava to live peacefully with other Vaiṣṇavas and cultivate friendship with them.[6] Kṛṣṇa worship is described as a monotheistic faith. Polytheism is denounced. "Knowledge" and "Action" are denigrated. Unnecessary and un-Vaiṣṇava rituals are debunked.[7] Following the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* Narottama states the theory of the sublimation of the instincts.[8] The aim of his *Sādhanā* was not the blunting of the senses but their sublimation. Thus *Kāma* or libido would be used in rendering selfless service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. *Krodha* or anger would be used as a weapon against the enemies of Vaiṣṇavism. *Lobha* or greed would be of use in strengthening Vaiṣṇava fraternity and the proselytisation movement. *Moha* or attachment would enable a Vaiṣṇava to worship Kṛṣṇa in different 'moods'. *Mada* or exhilaration would be a psychic ingredient in *Kīrtana*. Thus the instincts would be properly controlled, conse-

1. Ibid., section 29, verse 1; section 30, verse 4.
2. Text given in *Bṛhatbhaktitattvasāra*, pp. 290-484; 115 verses are collected.
3. Rāmacandra Kavirāja's death is mourned in verse 112, p. 481.
4. Verses 6-8.
5. Verses 2-4.
6. Verse 13 : *Kevala Bhakata Sanga.| Premakathā Rasaranga.|| Līlākathā-vrajarasapūre.||*
7. Vesses 9-11, 13-15, 17, 25, 38.
8. *Premabhakticandrikā*, verses 19-20.

crated to spiritual exercise, sublimated, and sanctified. In verse 22, however, Narottama advises his readers to suppress *Krodha* or anger.

According to Narottama spiritual freedom means freedom from the domination of the instincts.[1] This freedom is best achieved through the consecration of the soul to Kṛṣṇa. Narottama attaches no value to worldly attainments.[2]

Narottama's theology was accepted by a powerful circle of disciples. Both conservative Sanskrit scholars and notorious brigands, men and women of all castes and conditions, regarded him as their *guru*. A *Śūdra* according to contemporary *Smṛti*, Narottama created a furore by initiating Brāhmaṇas. Some conservative Brāhmaṇas and Śāktas began to say that he had not only violated the social norms, but had also made them feeble.[3] There is an interesting account in *Premavilāsa* of the tactic adopted by Narottama's learned disciples and friends against his opponents.[4] Rāmacandra Kavirāja, Govindadāsa Kavirāja, Gangānārāyaṇa Cakravartī, Harihara, Rāmakṛṣṇa and Jagannātha, Narottama's friends and disciples, who were great scholars, once wore the guises of low-caste, petty traders, and opend shops in the market of a village named Kāmārpur, adjacent to Kheturi. When Rūpanārāyaṇa, the court-scholar of the princedom of Pakkapallī, and the chief detractor of Narottama, came to those shops for provisions, the disguised Vaiṣṇavas conversed with them in chaste Sanskrit, and even challenged them to a theological duel. The disguised Vaiṣṇavas defeated them in the controversies held in the market. Rūpanārāyaṇa and his Brāhmaṇa friends immediately accepted Narottama as their *guru*.

At an annual festival in Kheturi Vīrabhadra himself delivered an address on the Brāhmaṇical qualities of Narottama Datta. He is reported to have said (quoting chapter and verse) that the practice

1. Ibid., verse 22. In verse 42 he explains the excellence of *Rāgānugā* devotion: *Rāgera Bhajana Patha| Kahi Eve Abhimata| Lokavedasāra Ei Vāṇī| Sakhīra Anugā Haiyā| Vraje Siddha Deha Pāiyā| Sei Bhāve Juḍāve Parāṇī.||*
2. Verse 24.
3. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 19, p. 331.
4. Ibid., Ch. 19, pp. 331-336.

of *bhakti* had already made Narottama far nobler than a Brāhmaṇa, and that he wore an 'internal sacred thread', the sign and emblem of Brāhmaṇahood, 'around the region of his heart'. The whole assembly thereupon recognised Narottama Datta as a venerable *Thākuramahāśaya* who was nobler than a Brāhmaṇa.[1]

VI

Very interesting is the fact that Narottama was able to convert a good number of the local robber barons and their associates. Their conversion into Vaiṣṇavism presumably resulted in the establishment of public peace at least in the inaccessible regions of North Bengal. Legends gathered round the conversion of such notorious robbers as Cānd Rāya, his brother Santoṣa Rāya, and their Brāhmaṇa cohorts like Govinda Bandyopādhyāya and Hariṣacandra Rāya.[2] One may safely conclude that the conversion of these powerful and notorious elements made Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism very strong in Rājshāhī, Murshidābād, and the adjacent areas in West Bengal. Secondly, Narottama's proselytising endeavour certainly had a noticeable effect on Brāhmaṇical conservatism. A number of Vaidika, Rāḍī, and Vārendra Brāhmaṇas, including some *Paṇḍitas*, who were noted for their extreme conservatism, became disciples of Narottama, who was technically a Śūdra. This development conceivably weakened the caste regulations of *Smṛti*.[3]

Premavilāsa gives us a list of one hundred and twenty-three disciples of Narottama.[4]

1. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 19, pp. 337-340; Narottama was described as the incarnation of the "ecstasy" of Nityānanda. Ibid., Ch. 19, p. 322; "*Nityānanda Prabhura Se Āveśa Avatāra*". also, p. 340: "*Nityānander Kalā Tāre Īśvara Vali Māna*".
2. Some of these legends are found in *Bhaktamālagrantha*: Ch. 17, "Chānd Rāya", pp. 248-51; Ch. 18: "Rabīndranarāyaṇa Rāya", pp. 255-272 (in Akṣaya Library ed.)
3. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 19, p. 331 where the conservative Brāhmaṇas are said to have denounced Narottama for violating the *Smṛti*-rules: "*Brāhmaṇere Mantra Diyā Kailā Sarvanāśa*", etc.
4. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 20, pp. 351-357.

CHAPTER XV

ŚYĀMĀNANDA MOVEMENT IN MIDNAPUR AND UTKALA

I

Śyāmānanda, a *Sadgopa* by caste, and his chief disciple Rasikamurāri spread Vaiṣṇavism in Midnapur and Utkala country. Their activities were confined to a belt which was essentially tribal. They were patronised by local chiefs. But they carefully maintained contact with the masses.

The Midnapur region was dominated by the local '*Bhuiyāns*' or landlords who fully collaborated with the Muhammadan governors. Towards the beginning of the nineteenth century a major part of the present Midnapur district, including Chandrakonā, Khirpāi, Hijli and Tamluk, belonged to the district of Hooghly. In 1814 Chandrakonā and Khirpāi were important commercial centres. The district of Midnapur belonged to Orissa. Two-thirds of the district "consisted of jungle". The district had, in 1814 or thereabouts, a population of 1.5 million. W. Hamilton certified that "a great majority of the inhabitants of the district have preserved their original simplicity. They are less quarrelsome and give less trouble than the natives of the neighbouring states".[1] According to RM, the local chiefs and *Bhuiyāns* of Midnapur were violent Vaiṣṇava-haters, and given to excessive lechery.[2] The common people suffered much.

II

According to one authority Śyāmānanda was born in 1556.[3] He died in Śaka 1552 (1630). He was probably younger than Śrīni-

1. W. Hamilton, *Description of Hindustan*, Vol. I, pp. 136-142.
2. RM *Pūrva*, 3, p. 13 : "*Kibā Rājā Kibā Prajā Saba Duṣtamati*", etc.
3. *Śrikhaṇḍer Prācin Vaiṣṇava*, Appendix. Haridāsa Dāsa fixes the date at 1533. GVA, 2, p. 1890. The date of Śyāmānanda's death is mentioned in RM, *Paścima*, 13, p. 138 : "*Panaraśa Bāhānna Śakāvda Se Pramāṇa/ Kṛṣṇera Sannidhe Prabhu Karilā Prayāṇa.//*

vāsa Ācārya and Narottama Datta. Śyāmānanda's parents Śrīkṛṣṇa Maṇḍal and Durikā migrated to Midnapnr from Gauḍa country.[1] They settled in the village Dhārendā (which is near the modern railway junction at Kharagpur). They made proper arrangements for Śyāmānanda's education. Almost nothing is known of his early life. He was called *Duhkhiyā* (or the miserable) Kṛṣṇadāsa. Early in his youth he must have been deeply influenced by Vaiṣṇavism. He expressed his preference for Vaiṣṇava initiation. His parents permitted him to go to Kālnā with some villagers who habitually visited the place for a ceremonial dip in the holy Gangā.[2]

According to RM, Śyāmānanda married thrice after returning to Midnāpur from Vṛndāvana.[3]

At Kālnā Śyāmānanda was introduced to Hṛdayacaitanya or Hṛdayānanda, the influential disciple of Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita. He was initiated by Hṛdayacaitanya who christened him Śyāmānanda.[4] Being a disciple of the Kālnā leader, Śyāmānanda belonged to the Nityānanda branch. Later he was sent to Vṛndāvana with an introductory letter from his *Guru* for advanced theological training.[5]

In Vṛndāvana Śyāmānanda became a pupil of Jīva Gosvāmin. The gosvāmin is said to have bestowed on him "the six-syllabled *mantra*" of Rādhā. He taught him *yapa* of the five names of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā.[6] It was later bruited in Bengal that violating a convention, Jīva Gosvāmin had become the second *Guru* of Syāmānanda. According to the apocryphal work *Abhirāmalīlāmṛta* Hṛdayacaitanya and the sixty-four *Mahāntas* took a highly critical view of Jīva Gosvāmin's conduct.[7] Most probably Jīva Gosvāmin had acted as the *Śikṣāguru* of Śyāmānanda, who was advised by him

1. RM, *Pūrva*, Ch. 2, p. 9.
2. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 12, pp. 146 ff.; BRK. Ch. I, pp. 1619.
3. RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 11, pp. 87-89.
4. RM, *Pūrva*, 2, p. 10: *Śuniyā Hṛdayānanda Prabhura Ānanda| Upadeśa Kari Nāma Dila Śyāmānanda.* But According to *Premavilāsa*, pp. 155, 157, it was Jīva Gosvāmin who christened him Śyāmānanda.
5. BRK. Ch. 1, p. 17 : verses 382-383 ; verses 406-410.
6. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 12 : p. 155.
7. *Abhirāmalīlāmṛta*, pp. 120-123.

to practise worship as a *manjarī* named *Kanakamanjarī*[1]. BRK, however, suggests that Hṛdayacaitanya gracefully accepted Śyāmānanda's transformation.[2] In Vṛndāvana he earned the coveted title of *Adhyāpaka*.[3] He also achieved the dubious distinction of discovering the lost *Nūpura* or foot-ornament of Rādhā.[4] Thereafter he and his followers invariably painted the *Nūpura*-sign as the *tilaka* mark on their foreheads. This particular *tilaka* distintuished them from the other Vaiṣṇavas.

In Vṛndāvana Śyāmānanda was introduced to Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Narottama Datta. He was also acquainted with Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, Raghunatha Dāsa Gosvāmin, Lokanātha Gosvāmin, Bhūgarbha Gosvāmin, and Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin.[5]

Śyāmānanda returned to Bengal along with Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Narottama Datta with cartloads of Vaiṣṇava manuscripts. When the precious manuscripts were stolen by Vīra Hāmvīra's retainers, Śrīnivāsa advised Narottama to make arrangements for Śyāmānanda's journey to Kālnā. Narottama and Śyāmānanda first came to Kheturi. From Kheturi Śyāmānanda went to Kālnā and there met Hṛdayacaitanya. Before returning to Dhārendā he visited Navadvīpa and Śāntipur. Later he visited Viṣṇupur and Purī. He once again went to Vṛndāvana with a view to studying Jīva Gosvāmins's *Gopālacampū* and some other texts.[6]

III

Śyāmānanda set up his permanent headquarters in Nṛsiṃhapur village near Dhārendā. His first important disciple was Rasikamurāri, son of Acyuta, king of Rohiṇī or Rayaṇi, which was situated on the confluence of the Suvarṇarekhā and Dolang rivers. The

1. *Premavilāsa*, 19, p. 304 : *Śyāmānandera Bhajanera Nāhika Upamā| Kanakamanjarī Tāra Haya Siddhanāmā.*
2. BRK. Ch. 1, pp. 16-19.
3. BRK, Ch. 6, pp. 320-324.
4. *Premavilāsa*, pp. 154-56.
5. BRK. Ch. 6, pp. 320-324.
6. BRK, pp. 355, 384, 389.

other notable disciples were Dāmodara Yogin and Sher Khān, a Pāthān Governor.[1] The most important disciple of Śyāmānanda was Rasikamurāri or Rasikānanda who transformed the Śyāmānanda movement in Midnapur and Utkala almost into a mass movement. According to RM, he was born in Śaka 1512 (A.D. 1590) and died at the age of sixty-two.[2] Since Rasikamurāri is said to have attended the first Kheturi festival, we may argue that the date of the festival should be fixed at a time between 1610 and 1620.

It should also be mentioned here that there is some confusion about the identity of Rasikamurāri. In *Premavilāsa* Rasika and Murāri are clearly referred to as *two* sons of king Acyuta. Rasika's wife was Mālati. Murāri's wife was Śacīrāṇi.[3] But in RM Rasikamurāri is always referred to as a single person. In BRK Rasika and Murāri are mentioned as two different names of a single person.[4] But the mention of Rasika and Murāri as two sons of Acyuta in *Premavilāsa* (which furnishes a list of Śyāmānanda's other disciples) cannot be rejected as mere fiction. It may be argued that Rasika and Murāri were step-brothers. King Acyuta had "2/4 wives" and several sons.[5] In all probability Rasika or Rasikānanda grew so powerful that Murāri was easily consigned to the limbo.

It was probably after Sher Khān's conversion that Śyāmānanda and Rasika could hold the following Vaiṣṇava festivals through which the religion was spread among the people.

1. Baḍakolā[6]
2. Ālamganja[7]
3. Naihāti[8]
4. Nṛsiṃhapur[9]

1. *Premavilāsa*, 19, pp. 302-305; RM, *Pūrva*, 3, pp. 13-14; *Dakṣiṇa*, 1, pp. 62-65.
2. RM, *Pūrva*, 4, p. 17; *Uttara*, 16, pp. 185-187.
3. *Premavilāsa*, p, 303: *Tathi Āchaye Rājā Acyutānanda Nāma.|| Rasika Murāri Nāme Tāra Putradvaya.| Śyāmānanda Tahe Kṛpa Kailā Atiśaya.||*
4. BRK. Ch. 15, p. 643, verse 27.
5. RM, *Pūvva*, 3, p. 15 : "*Dui Cāri Patnī Tāra Aneka Tanaya*".
6. RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 10, pp. 84-87.
7. RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 11, pp. 87-89.
8. RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 12, p. 89.
9. GVA, 2, p. 1900.

5. Gopīvallabhpur[1]
6. Śyāmasundarapur[2]
7. Govindapur[3]
8. Dhārendā[4]

The second festival at Ālamganja was held with the permission of the local Muhammadan magistrate who was called *Harbolā* or the ventriloquist. In Gopīvallabhapur the *Mahārāsayātrā* was organised on a huge scale. The living descendants of Nityānanda and Advaita, and the surviving disciples of the twelve *Gopālas* were invited to attend it. Hṛdayacaitanya and Āul Manohara Dāsa attended it. Despite intensive indoctrination in Vṛndāvana, Śyāmānanda maintained his original link with the followers of Nityānanda and Advaita. It is significant that RM contains no information regarding Śyāmānanda's relation with Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Narottama Datta. Since RM was written by a disciple of Śyāmānanda and a follower of Rasikamurāri, the question of their participation in the Kheturi festival, as recorded in *Premavilāsa*, looks rather intriguing.

Each of these festivals gave Śyāmānanda and Rasikamurāri the golden opportunity to convert hundreds of people. Money for these festivals presumably flowed from many 'royal' treasuries.

A noticeable feature of the Vaiṣṇava movement of Śyāmānanda and Rasikamurāri was its very close association with the local Hindu and Muhammadan landlords. Śyāmānanda converted Acyuta, *Rājā* of Rayaṇī,[5] the landlord of Ghāṭśilā,[6] Bhīmadhana Bhuiyān, the landlord of Govindapur,[7] Rājyadhara Rāya, the landlord of bush-covered Bāgḍī,[7] Uddanda Rāya, the *Bhuiyān* of Nṛsiṃhapur,[9] and Sher Khān, the Pāthan governor.[10] Rasikamurāri converted

1. RM, *Paścima*, 1-3, pp. 105-112.
2. GVA, 2, p. 1947.
3. RM, *Dakṣiṇa*. 12, p. 90.
4. GVA, 2, p. 1890.
5. BRK, Ch. 15, p. 643, verses 26-27.
6. GVA, 2, p. 1866. Ghāṭśīlā or Ghantaśīlā was a part of the Rayaṇī kingdom.
7. GVA, 2, p. 1864.
8. GVA, 2, p. 1943.
9. RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 16, pp. 105-104.
10. *Premavilāsa*, pp. 304-305.

Vaidyanātha Bhanja, ruler of Mayūrabhanja,[1] Gajapati, king of Patashpur,[2] Harinārāyaṇa of Pāncet,[3] Candrabhānu, king of Maynā,[4] Bhīma and Śrīkara, tyrannical *Bhuiyāns* of Dhārendā,[5] and Āhmad Beg, nephew of Ibrāhim Beg, *Subāhdār* of Orissa.[6] Rasikamurāri even captured, and sent to the *Subāhdār* of Bengal, twenty wild elephants. The *Subāhdār* was profoundly impressed by the splendid gift.[7] The conversion of so many leading men of Midnapur made it possible for the two leaders to convert large segments of the local population without any serious opposition.

IV

The villages of Midnapur which became the centres of the powerful Śyāmānanda movement are mentioned below, with references in parenthesis :

1. Ālamganja (RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 11, pp. 87-89)
2. Balarāmpur (RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 9, pp. 83-84)
3. Bāgḍī (GVA, 2, p. 1943)
4. Baḍakolā (RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 10. pp. 84-87)
5. Baḍagrāma (GVA, 2, p. 1945)
6. Basantapur (RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 10, p. 84)
7. Bāṇpur, The idol of Śyāmānanda is worshipped here (RM, *Paścima*, 9, pp, 126-27)
8. Bhanjabhūm-Rājgarh. The Capital of Vaidyanātha Bhanja. (RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 12, 89-92)
9. Bhograi (W.W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, 3, p. 18)
10. Cākuliyā (RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 1, pp. 62-65)
11. Dhārendā-Bāhādurpur (GVA, 2, p. 1890)
12. Fatepur (GVA, 2, p. 1890)
13. Gopīvallabhpur (RM, 1-3, pp. 105-112)
14. Ghāṭśīlā (GVA, 2, p. 1866)
15. Hariharapur. Here lived Duhkhi Śyāmādāsa, author of *Govindamangala* (Ibid. p. 1979)

1. RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 12, pp. 89-92; *Paścima*, 14, p. 142.
2. RM, *Paścima*, 9, pp. 126-129.
3. RM, *Paścima*, 14, p. 144.
4. RM, *Paścima*, 14, p. 143.
5. RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 5, pp. 74-76.
6. RM, *Uttara*, 11, pp. 172-175.
7. RM, *Uttara*, 11, pp. 173-175.

16. Hijli (Ibid. p. 1981)
17. Jhātiāḍā (RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 12, pp. 89-90)
18. Kāśīpur. A Vaiṣṇava settlement made by Rasikamurāri's brother Kāśīnātha Dāsa (RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 3, p. 68)
19. Keśiāḍi or Kāśiāḍi. (RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 12, pp. 89-90)
20. Keonjhar. Once a native state in Orisa (RM, *Paścima*, 14, pp. 139 f.)
21. Maynā. Once an important centre of the Nāth-Siddha cult. (RM, *Paścima*, 14, p. 143)
22. Mayurbhanja (GVA, 2, p. 1922)
23. Muktāpur (RM, *Uttara*, 8, p. 166)
24. Nṛsiṃhapur (GVA, 2, p. 1900)
25. Rayaṇī (RM, *Pūrva*, 3, pp. 13-16)
26. Raghunāthabāti (GVA, 2, p. 1934)
27. Rāṇīhāti (GVA, 2, p. 1934)
28. Remunā, in Bālāsore, Orissa (GVA, 2, p. 1941)
29. Śyāmasundarpur (GVA, 2, p. 1967)

V

Some other Śyāmānandī Vaiṣṇavas did much useful work. Bhanjana Adhikārī, a Brāhmaṇa disciple of Śyāmānanda, lived in Fatepur village mentioned above. He spread Vaiṣṇavism under Śyāmānanda's guidance in the villages within the jurisdictions of the present police-stations of Kānthi (Contai) and Keśiāḍi.[1] Gokula Dāsa, a disciple of Rasikamurāri, achieved remarkable success in spreading Vaiṣṇavism among the tribal population of Keonjhar.[2] Govinda Dāsa, another disciple of Rasikamurāri, did useful missionary work in Bhanjabhūm.[3]

Thirty-one notable disciples of Śyāmānanda are mentioned in several accounts.[4]

The names of two hundred and three disciples of Rasikamurāri are mentioned in RM. The important point is that many Brāhmaṇas accepted Śyāmānanda and Rasika as their preceptors. Rasika's

1. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, 1, p. 144.
2. RM, *Paścima*, 14, p. 142 : *Rasikera Valyaśisya Śrī Gokula Dāsa| Kendujhuri Pradeśe Bhakti Karila Prakāśa.||*
3. RM, *Paścima*, 14, p. 143 : *Mahādhīra Premamūrti Śrī Govinda Dāsa...| Vahu Śiṣya Karilena Bhanjabhūma Deśe||*
4. *Premavilāsa*, pp. 301-303, 357-359; RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 12, 89-90, *Paścima* 14, 15, pp. 139-147.

disciple Govinda Bhattācārya went to 'Vanga' and there he is said to have converted hundreds of Brāhmaṇas. The egalitarianism inherent in the Caitanya movement was nowhere more prominent than in Midnapur. The festivals helped the liberalisation of the caste system. Brāhmaṇical opposition to the Śyāmānanda movement was perhaps rendered negligible by the patronage extended to it by the local kings and *Bhuiyāns*.

VI

A special feature of the Śyāmānanda movement in Midnāpur was its peaceful existence with the Nityānanda tradition in isolated areas. In Garbhetā a powerful Vaiṣṇava centre was developed by Kānu Thākura who was a descendant of *Gopāla* Puruṣottama Dāsa of Sukhsāgar. In Jāḍāgrāma (Ghātāl Sub-division), another Vaiṣṇava centre was built up by Gumphanārāyaṇa, a disciple of *Gopāla* Rāmadāsa Abhirāma.

In the introductory verses of RM there is no mention of Caitanya, Nityānanda and Advaita. But the gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana have been mentioned therein. Caitanya, Nityānanda, Advaita, Viṣṇupriya Devī, Jāṇhavā Devī, Vīrabhadra, some *Gopālas* (including the obscure *Gopāla* Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa) are paid obeisance in the '*Vandanā*' part written in Bengali verse.[1] Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Narottama are not mentioned at all. The omission of their names probably indicates the outbreak of quarrels between the Midnāpur Vaiṣṇavas and the Vaiṣṇavas of Rāḍa and Gauḍa. They might have clashed over their respective rights and privileges in the "Vaisnavised" princedoms and estates in Bhanjabhūm, Varāhabhūm and Śikharabhūm.[2] In *Premavilāsa* Midnāpur and Utkala have not been described as important centres of the Vaiṣṇava movement. Much importance has been attached therein to Yājīgrāma, Kheturi and Viṣṇupur.[3] During Śyāmānanda's life-time there was perfect

1. RM, p. 1: *Ślokas* 1-6, and the '*Vandanā*' portion in pp. 2-3.
2. Sukumar Sen's hypothesis in *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. 1, Part II, pp. 32-33.
3. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 14, p. 207: "*Ekdina Ei Mane Haila Eka Rīti| Thākura Kahaye Thākuramahāśaya Prati|| Tina Ghara Haila Tāhā Kahiye Viśeṣe| Khetari Yājīgrāma Viṣṇupura Tina Deśe.||*

unity among his disciples. Trouble arose after his death. Quarrel for the possession of Śyāmānanda's *'gādi'* or bishopric broke out among his three wives.[1] Ultimately with Rasikamurāri's intervention the Śyāmānanda Vaiṣṇavas established two centres at Gopīvallabhpur and Śyamasundarapur. After Śyāmānanda's death Rasikamurāri became the undisputed leader of the Śyāmānandī Vaiṣṇavas.

VII

Rasikamurāri was perhaps more successful in converting people into Vaiṣṇavism than any other Vaiṣṇava leader of his time. Unfortunately nothing is known of the methods adopted by him to make his proselytisation programme a grand success. A natural advantage of that leader was his close link with the ruling class of the area. Being the son of a king he had ready access to the territorial aristocracy. In RM his theological ideas have been inadequately stated.[2] It seems that he was more a worker than a theologian. But the fact that thousands of the local inhabitants flocked to him for spiritual guidance makes it clear that he must have held out some hope for them. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in Bengal had no centralised organisation. That was why Śyāmānanda and Rasikamurāri were never required to work in other areas of Bengal. The other Vaiṣṇava leaders did not requisition their services.

The Śyāmānanda movement in Midnapur and Utkala produced some important results. So many people embraced Vaiṣṇavism that a definite caste of the Vaiṣṇavas evolved in Midnapur. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, Midnapur had nearly 1,00,000 Śyāmānandī Vaiṣṇavas.[3] The 'caste'

1. RM, *Uttara*, 4, p. 158 : "*Tina Thākurāṇī Prīti Na Haila Sarvathā|...Niravadhi Kalaha Karena Akāraṇe||*
2. RM, *Dakṣiṇa*, 7, pp. 78-80; Pūrva, 16, pp. 59-61. It seems that the Śyāmānandī Vaiṣṇavas unreservedly accepted the theology of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins.
3. This figure is stated in the advertisement attached to the first printed edition of RM published by Sāradāprasād Mitra of Tamluk. The date of the publication is not stated.

Vaiṣṇavas numbered 96,178 according to the census of 1879.[1] The Kāyasthas of Midnapur and Balāsore raised their caste status by embracing Vaiṣṇavism.[2] The non-Brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇava *Gurus* and gosvāmins, most of whom grew affluent, began to enjoy Brāhmanical privileges. *Premavilāsa* refers to Śyāmānanda's sacred thread.[3] Some of the Vaiṣṇava *Gurus* of Midnāpur and Utkala even had *guruprasādī* rights according to *jus primae noctis*.[4]

It is interesting to note that Vaiṣṇavism in Midnapur was linked with the prevailing system of land-tenure. Hunter noted that Midnapur had as many as 272 '*Vaiṣṇavottara*' holdings.[5] *Vaiṣṇavottara* land was tax-free, rent-free land donated to the *Gurus* and *Mahāntas* by their disciples or by sympathetic landlords. *Vaiṣṇavottara* tenure led to land reclamation on a large scale in an area dotted with jungles and marshes. It also led to the spread of Brāhmaṇical culture among the tribal people. Rasikamurāri himself described Śyāmānanda as the saviour of tribals, thereby implying that Brāhmaṇical culture was spread among them.[6]

Vaiṣṇava influence on the tribal culture of Varāhabhūm is clearly discernible in the worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Mahāprabhu-Caitanya by the local tribes. The Vaiṣṇava theme of love and the separation of lovers is an ingredient of such tribal songs as *Nācnī Śailā*, *Khyāpār Dhuyā* (meaning, Burthen of the Mad), and *Dehatattva Jhumur*.[7] *Nācnī Śailā* was a sort of tribal *Kīrtana* couched in a curious mixture of Bengali and Brajabhākhā. It was patronised by the local rulers. Its main theme was the extra-marital relation

1. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, 3, p. 51. The number came down to 92,698 in the Census of 1901. Vide, *Census of India*, 1901, Vol. VI B, Part III, p. 69.
2. L.S.S.O' Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Midnapur*, pp. 64-65,
3. *Premavilāsa*, p. 304. "*Jyotirmaya Paitā Ange Kare Jhalamala*" etc.
4. Bhūpendranāth Datta. *Vaiṣṇava Sāhitye Samājatattva*, p. 110.
5. Hunter, op. cit. p. 96.
6. *Śrī Śrī Śyāmānandacaritaṃ*, verses 20-21.
7. The types of songs have been studied by Pūrṇimā Sinha : "Varāhabhūmer Lokasaṃgīta O Mārgasaṃgīter Vivartaner Sūtra", *Sāhityapatra* (Calcutta Quarterly), Rainy Season Number, (Varṣāsaṃkalan), B.S. 1377 (1970) pp. 31-47.

between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. Many songs on the Caitanya legend, particularly on the subject of Caitanya's renunciation of the world, were composed by mendicant *Vairāgins* in the *Khyāpār Dhuyā* style. The *Jhumur* songs of the Jhārgrām region were unmistakably Vaiṣṇava in theme and language. But the songs on *Dehatattva* or mystical physiognomy were influenced by the Bāul and Sahajiyā cults.

The Śyāmānanda movement in Midnapur created an atmosphere conducive to the peaceful co-existence of diverse sects. The Dharma cult had considerable following in Ghātāl and Tamluk sub-divisions.[1] Śāktaism was strong in Karṇagarh, Midnapur town and Candrakonā. There is a legend of a struggle between the Śākta rulers of Karṇagarh and the Vaiṣṇava rulers of Viṣṇupur, in which Māhāmāyā (Durgā) and Madanamohana (Kṛṣṇa) are said to have waged a close quarter battle.[2] But such fights, caused probably by disputed ownership of land, were very rare. An indication of Vaiṣṇava-Śākta syncretism in Midnapur is found in Rāmeśvara Cakravartī's *Śivāyaṇa*, a work on Śiva-Durgā worship, or rather on the worship of Durgā in the form of an untouchable Bāgdī woman. In this work Caitanya, Nityānanda, and the twelve *Gopālas* have been paid obeisance in a series of introductory verses.[3] As elsewhere in Bengal, the Vaiṣṇava mystic and the Muhammadan Fakir formed a syncretic brotherhood in Midnapur.[4] But the emphasis of Śyāmānanda and Rasikamurāri was rather on quantity than on quality. No distinguished poet or *Padāvalī* composer of the calibre of Govinda Dāsa, Jnāna Dāsa, Rāyaśekhara, and Balarāma Dāsa emerged out of the Śyāmānanda movement. Since both Śyāmānanda and Rasikamurāri were married it is conceivable that they did not preach any lofty ideal of asceticism, which could not

1. Āshutosh Bhattācārya, "Dharma and Serpent Worship in Bankura District", *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Bankura*, p. 207.
2. *Rāmeśvara Racanāvalī*, ed. Pancānan Cakravartī, p. 82.
3. Ibid. p. 358. In Mayanāpāḍā (Beldā Police Station) *Śakta*-Brāhmaṇas worship the idols of Nityānanda and Caitanya, GVA, Vol. 2, p. 1921.
4. Ibid. p. 43 : *"Fakir Balen Terā Jāti Nahi Jābe/ Rāma Rahim E Saṃsāre Ekai Jānibe.// Fakir Balen Tumi Muda Duti Cokha/ Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Dui Rūpa Dekhibe Pratyakṣa.// Śivāyaṇa* was composed in 1710-11. Ibid. pp. 74-76.

be followed by the householders. Their strong link with the 'feudal' elements might have a secular motivation. The question whether the "Vaisnavisation" of the autocratic *Bhuiyāns* did really result in a mitigation of their tyrany cannot be answered. As elsewhere in Bengal the Vaiṣṇava movement in Midnapur and Utkala country probably strengththened the position of the landlords. Vaiṣṇavism was not calculated to build up opposition to their tyranny. The kings and the landlords might have supported the two leaders for two reasons. Firstly, Vaiṣṇavism helped them elevate their position in the caste hierarchy.[1] Since an initiated Vaiṣṇava had no recognisable caste, he was above caste. Secondly, it may perhaps be argued that Vaiṣṇavism, with its emphasis on non-violence and faith in the world-redeemer Kṛṣna, made the downtrodden peasantry mild-tempered. So far as the *Rājās* and the *Bhuiyāns* were concerned, this was a most desirable development.

An important result of the Śyāmānanda movement was the evolution of the "Reṇeti' style of *Kīrtana* in the Rāṇihāti Pargana in Midnapur. *Renetī Kīrtana* was comparable in style and design to Hindustani classical *Thumri* songs. But *Renetī Kīrtana* remained localised and gradually withered away, owing to the great popularity of *Monoharśāhī Kīrtana.* It was revived by some professional *Kīrtana* singers towards the middle of the nineteenth century. One Beṇī Dāsa was their leader.[2]

The spread of Vaiṣṇavism in Midnapur formed the background of the construction of a very large number of Vaiṣṇava temples in the district. There was, however, no remarkable deviation from the *Pirhā*, *Śikhara*, *Cālā* and *Ratna* styles of temple building during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Many of these temples were endowed with *Vaiṣṇavottara* lands. The Midna-

1. We may say that in Midnapur Vaiṣṇavism was a method of "Sanskritization" on a large scale. For an explanation of "Sanskritization" as a sociological concept, see, M.N. Srinivas, *Social change in Modern India*, Orient Longman Limited, 1982 ed. "Sanskritization" pp. 1-45; also, M.N. Srinivas, "A note on Sanskritization and Westernization", *Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 15. No. 4. August 1956, pp. 481-496.
2. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, Vol. 6 (1894), p. 25.

pur temples, however, had not the brilliant terracota ornamentation of the temples of Bānkurā and Viṣṇupur.

The approximate number of Vaiṣṇava temples within the jurisdictions of the present police-stations is given below :[2]

Police Station	*Number of Temples*
Bhagavānpur	5
Binpur	1
Candrakonā	15
Contāi	1
Dāspur	26
Dānton	3
Debrā	8
Dihivallabhpur	1
Egḍā	11
Ghātāl	10
Garbhetā	6
Gopīvallabhpur	1
Keshpur	6
Mahiṣādal	2
Midnapur Town	14
Maynā	1
Patāshpur	2
Sabang	3
Pinglā	3
Sālbonī	1

2. Data collected form McCutchion, *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal.*

CHAPTER XVI

MURALĪVILĀSA, VAMŚĪŚIKṢĀ AND THE RASARĀJA CONCEPT

I

Towards the end of the sixteenth century a powerful Vaiṣṇava centre evolved in the bush-covered and desolate Bāghnāpāḍā area of Kālnā sub-division. The centre developed a distinct theology which was linked with the ideas of the Vṛndavana gosvamins, but which yet sounded at least partly deviant with a Tāntrikā-Sahajiyā undertone. The Bāghnāpāḍā Vaiṣṇavas claimed a special relation with the Vaiṣṇavas of the Nityānanda branch. In fact Rāmacandra, the founding father of the Bāghnāpāḍā centre, was a foster-child of Jāṇhavā Devī.

The legends and theology of the Bāghnāpāḍā Vaiṣṇavas are given in two works entitled respectively *Muralīvilāsa* (MV) and *Vaṃśīśikṣā* (VS). These works were published towards the end of the nineteenth century. MV was written by Rājavallabha Gosvāmin possibly towards the beginning of the seventeenth century.[1] Premadāsa Miśra wrote VS in Śaka 1638 (A.D. 1716). He was indebted to MV for his biographical materials.[2] According to Sukumar Sen the printed MV is not authentic.[3] Bimānbihārī Majumdār rejects these works as forgeries.[4] According to Majumdār these works are so much full of anachronisms and Sahajiya theories that no sober historian of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order should regard them as authentic works.

1. MV, *Upasaṃhāra*, p. 1.
2. VS, Ch. 4, p. 206 : *Śolaśata Aṣṭatriṃśa Śakera Gaṇana/ Śrī Srī Vamśīsikṣāgrantha Karinu Varṇana.*
3. *Bāngālā Sahityer Itihas* Vol. I, Part II, p. 31, fn. But Sen does not explain this point. Haridāsa Dāsa merely mentions these works in *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, II, pp. 15, 65, 155. Bijitkumar Datta sums up the contents of MV, or rather a MS of MV found in Bankura in *Ācārya Rādhāgovinda Nāth Smārak Grantha*, pp. 120-124.
4. *Srīcaitanyacariter Upādān*. p. 468-477.

But the only thing which may not be apocryphal in these works is the exposition of the theological and ritualistic concepts. The acceptance or rejection of such works should not, therefore, be conditioned by their apparent conformity to, or deviation from what is considered the orthodox and correct interpretation of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. There is at least one recorded instance of the recognition of the Sahajiyās and Bāuls as 'Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' on the ground of their deep veneration for Caitanya.[1]

Bimānbihāri Majumdār is of opinion that Vaṃśīvadana, grandfather of Rāmacandra, and the earliest Vaiṣṇava of the *Rasarāja* school, was certainly not an 'important' companion of Caitanya.[2] He also refers to the authors of MV and VS as men of "unknown antecedents", whose accounts fundamentally differ from such "respectable" works as *Premavilāsa* and BRK.[3] Vaṃśivadana is not mentioned in CBH, CCM, Murāri Gupta's *Kaḍacā*, and the biographical works of Karṇapūra. But he is certainly mentioned in GGD as the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa's flute.[4] It is indeed strange that Majumdār did not find any reference to Vaṃśivadana in Daivakīnandana's *Vaiṣṇavavandanā*.[5] In this work the man is referred to in two consecutive verses.[6] According to *Premavilāsa* Vaṃśivadana and Īśāṇa looked after Śrīnivāsa Ācārya in Navadvīpa.[7] According to another authority Vaṃśivadana was so important that he was adopted by Viṣṇupriya as her son. He acted as the guardian of Śacī Devī and Viṣṇupriyā after Caitanya began to live in Purī. The same authority even avers that Vaṃśivadana married the daughter of Candraśekhara Paṇḍita, Nityānanda's younger brother.[8] Narahari Sarkār, albeit important, was not mentioned in CBH. Some

1. Bhūpendranāth Datta, *Vaiṣṇava Sāhitye Samājatattva*, p. 109, fn.
2. Majumdār, op. cit., p. 468.
3. Ibid., pp. 474-75.
4. GGD, p. 48, verse 179.
5. Majumdār, op. cit., p. 468.
6. "Vaiṣṇavavandanā" in *Bṛhatbhaktitattvasāra*, p. 23 : "*Śrīvaṃśīvadana Vandon Yuḍi Dui Kara* etc.
7. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 4, pp. 37-38; also, BRK, Ch. 4, p. 76.
8. *Gaurapadataraṅginī*, p. 209. Vaṃśīvadana's chief disciple Jagadānanda lived in village Jagatimangalpur in Midnāpur.

orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas regarded even Vīrabhadra as a simulacrum because his name was not mentioned in CBH.[1] We should not be oblivious of the fact that the importance of the Vaiṣṇavas mentioned in the biographies of Caitanya was merely relative. The great majority of them simply disappear from the stage after being perfunctorily mentioned once or twice.

Rājavallabha, the great grandson of Vaṃśīvadana, cannot therefore, be summarily dismissed as a person of unknown antecedents For some unknown reason he does not give in MV a long and tedious genealogical account. Just from this fact one should not jump to the conclusion that he was a nonentity. As for Premadāsa Miśra, author of VS, it will suffice to note that he translated Karṇapūra's *Caitanyacandrodaya* into Bengali verse in Śaka 1534 (1712). He had considerable literary ability.

Admittedly MV and VS are not merely copies of *Premavilāsa* and BRK. These works do not mention Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Narottama, Rāmacandra Kavirāja and Śyāmānanda, the great leaders of post-Caitanya Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal. But it is a blunder to say, as Majumdār does, that these works refer to matters which contradict the legends given in *Premavilāsa* and BRK.[2] According to MV Jāṇhavā Devī went to Vṛndāvana, and there met Rūpa and Sanātana.[3] Majumdār writes that, according to *Premavilāsa* and BRK, Jāṇhavā Devī went to Vṛndāvana *after* the Kheturi festival when Rūpa and Sanātana were no more.[4] Majumdār apparently pays no attention to Chapters 15 and 16 of *Premavilāsa* wherein Jāṇhavā Devī's *two* journeys to Vṛndāvana are narrated. The first journey was made before the Kheturi festival when Rūpa and Sanātana might have been alive.[5]

The biographical portions of both MV and VS contain similar narratives. Apart from this similarity, MV is quite different from VS in both basic design and interpretations. MV is the biography

1. Bhūpendranāth Datta, op. cit., p. 127 fn.
2. Majumdār, op. cit., p. 474.
3. MV, Ch. 16.
4. Majumdār, p. 474.
5. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 16, pp. 218-238.

of Rāmacandra, foster-son of Jāṇhavā Devī. VS deals mainly with the *Rasarāja* concept. In MV Jāṇhavā Devī is both the initiator-*guru* (*Dīkṣāguru*) and teacher-*guru* of Rāmacandra. But in VS, the *Rasarāja* idea is explained by Caitanya himself even before he has renounced the world. The evidence for the basic formulations of MV is derived mainly from the works of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins. But these works are scarcely mentioned in VS. The Vṛndāvana gosvāmins are mentioned in some of the invocatory verses in VS.[1]

II

Vaṃśīvadana Cattopādhyaya, a *Kulīna* Brāhmaṇa, and son of Chakaḍi Cattopādhyāya, was the 'human incarnation of Kṛṣṇa's flute'. He was nine years younger than Caitanya. The new-born infant was christened Vaṃśīvadana by Caitanya himself.[2] At Caitanya's request Vaṃśīvadana married, and became the father of two sons named Caitanyadāsa and Nityānandadāsa. Vaṃśīvadana died just after Caitanya's death.[3] Caitanyadāsa, his eldest son, married, and became the father of two sons named Rāmacandra and Śacīnandana.[4] Caitanyadāsa participated in the Kheturi festival.[5] Both Jāṇhavā Devī and Viṣṇupriyā Devī were intimately acquainted with the Cattopādhyāya family. Even before Rāmacandra's birth, Jāṇhavā Devī, a childless widow, extracted from Caitanyadāsa the promise that he would permit her to adopt Rāmacandra, his eldest child.[6]

In due time Jāṇhavā Devī became Rāmacandra's foster-mother. A formal ceremony of adoption was held. But just before the ceremonical adoption Jāṇhavā Devī initiated Rāmacandra by giving him

1. VS. pp. 2-3.
2. MV, p. 41 : *Śacīra Kumāra/ Dekhi Sukumāra/ Bālaka Laiyā Kole/ Pulakita Anga/ Haiyā Tribhanga Āmāra Muralī Bale//*
3. MV, p, 47 : But how could, then, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya meet him in Navadvīpa? See, *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 4, pp. 37-38; BRK, Ch. 4, p. 76.
4. Rāmacandra's date in VS, p. 204 : Śaka 1456-1505 (1534-1583)
5. BRK. Ch. 10, p. 418, verses 385-386.
6. MV. p. 47.

the *mantra* of "Hare Kṛṣṇa". It was really very difficult for Caitanyadāsa and his wife to give up their beloved eldest son. When Jāṇhava Devī took him away to Khaḍadaha, the parents shed bitter tears.[1] At Khaḍadaha, Vīrabhadra graciously accepted Rāmacandra as his younger brother. Jāṇhavā Devī taught him the basic tenets of the Vṛndavana gosvāmins.[2] Rāmacandra strictly followed a schedule of daily rituals under her guidance.

With Jāṇhavā Devī's blessings and Vīrabhadra's assistance Rāmacandra went to Purī where he met Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Rāmānanda Rāya, and king Pratāparudra.[3] From Puri Rāmacandra returned to Bengal, and, for the first time since his adoption, met his parents in Navadvīpa. He also went to Śantipur and there met Sīta Devī and Acyutānanda.[4] Later he met *Gopāla* Rāmadāsa Abhirāma in Khānākul-Kṛṣṇanagar, and Narahari Sarkār in Śrīkhaṇḍa.[5] Meanwhile he had taken the vow of life-long celibacy. After coming back to Khaḍadaha he proposed that he should be permitted to go to Vṛndāvana. Jāṇhavā Devī expressed her desire to accompany him.[6]

With Uddhārana Datta as their guide, Jāṇhavā Devī and Rāmacandra arrived at Vṛndāvana. They were given a grand reception by the six gosvāmins.[7] In Vṛndāvana Jāṇhavā Devī soon became a very prominent figure. She visited the sacred spots and the woods. The Vaiṣṇavas were fed in magnificent feasts given by her. But one day many Vaiṣṇavas, including Rāmacandra, witnessed her miraculous fusion with the idol of Gopīnatha in 'Kāmyavana'.[8] In other words they witnessed her death. Her death caused great grief. The gosvāmins asked Rāmacandra to go back to Bengal. One day, while bathing in the Yamunā river, Rāmacandra got the

1. MV. pp. 65-71.
2. Her teachings are explained in chs. 6-8 of MV.
3. MV, Ch. 10. See the contradiction of Majumdār, op. cit. pp. 473-74.
4. MV, Ch. 12, pp. 205-224.
5. MV, Ch. 13, pp. 225-243.
6. MV, Ch. 14, pp. 250-255.
7. MV, Ch. 15, pp. 279-283.
8. MV, Ch. 16. p. 310, also Ch. 17, p. 322.

idols of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama.[1] With these two idols he returned to Bengal.

Rāmacandra first came to Kātwā. He then went to Bāghnāpāḍā which was then covered with tiger-infested bush.[2] But he decided to stay at that place. In the presence of some inquisitive villagers and backwoodsmen, Rāmacandra performed a miracle. He "vaiṣṇavised" a man-eater. The converted tiger took a dip in the Gangā, rolled on the ground in *bhakti*-ecstasy, and ultimately gave up its ghost.[3] The miracle at once made Rāmacandra famous. A rich Kṣatriya came forward to help him clear the jungle.[4] A big village grew up. Shops were set up. Many people began to live in the village. A temple and a Vaiṣṇava dormitory were built. Rāmacandra, who soon became a powerful *Mahānta*, also made proper arrangements for the worship of Śiva and Durgā.[5]

Vīrabhadra somehow came to hear of the emerging Vaiṣṇava centre of Bāghnāpāḍā.[6] He wanted to test its strength. Without prior notice he sent to Bāghnāpāḍā his terrible task-force of twelve hundred shaven heads, who arrived at the place at midnight, and clamoured for food and shelter. They demanded a feast of "mango and *Hilsā* fish curry". *Hilsā* fish might somehow be procured from the Gangā. But mangoes in the wintry month of *Māgha* were an impossible proposition. The miracle-man Rāmacandra once again performed a miracle. He procured for his disreputable guests both *Hilsā* fish and mango, nicely cooked the curry within a few minutes, and served it in large steaming dishes. The gluttons were fed to repletion. At bursting point they rose up, and warmly thanked Rāmacandra. Enjoying his hospitality for two more days the shaven heads came back to Khaḍadaha and gladly reported to Vīrabhadra the fact that the abbot of Bāghnāpāḍā was Rāmcandra, his 'younger brother'.[7]

1. MV, Ch. 18, pp. 333-334.
2. MV, Ch. 19, pp. 348 f.
3. MV, p. 349.
4. MV, p. 353, also p. 362.
5. MV, p. 364.
6. MV, pp. 367-68.
7. MV, pp. 369-37.

Vīrabhadra now appeared in Bāghnāpāḍā with hundreds of disciples. Rāmacandra organised for the party a grand reception. Vīrabhadra was very much impressed by Rāmacandra's "brotherly love". He stayed with him throughout the month and studied with him such classics as *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu, Ujjvalanīlamaṇi, Haribhaktivilāsa* and *Vidagdhamādhava.*[1]

Rāmacandra also cultivated the friendship of Mīnaketana Rāmadāsa, and the existing *Gopālas.* The images of Rādhā and Revatī were installed in the Bāghnāpāḍā temple, and Rājavallabha was initiated in a magnificent function which was attended by many important Vaiṣṇavas.[2]

III

The teachings of Jāṇhavā Devi, summed up in MV,[3] lack originality. She seems to have been deeply influenced by the works of Rūpa Gosvāmin and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. The theology ascribed in MV to Jāṇhavā Devī has no Sahajiyā concept. It may, therefore, be safely argued that Dimock committed a blunder when he regarded her as a Sahajiyā leader.[4] Rāmacandra, too, strictly adhered to the orthodox faith. At first he belonged to the school of Nityānanda which emphasized the friendly mood. Rāmacandra's worship of the idol of Balarāma, described in MV, had a connection with the 'friendly' or 'brotherly' mood. But ultimately he worshipped also Rādhā and Revatī, Śiva and Durgā. But these types of worship had no Sahajiyā flavour.

Jāṇhavā Devī regarded Caitanya as Supreme God and her *Guru.* She preached the doctrine of the consubstantiality of the *Guru* and the disciple.[5] The *Madhurarasa* or the erotic sentiment was to her the best of all sentiments. Rādhā was the fountain of *Madhurarasa.*[6]

1. MV, pp. 373-379, 367-388.
2. MV, pp. 396-407.
3. MV. Chs. 6, 7, 8.
4. *The Place of the Hidden Moon,* p. 52, note 26.
5. MV, pp. 49, 56-57.
6. MV, pp. 58-59.

Jāṇhavā Devī was conversant with the *Sādhyasādhanatattva* as expounded by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja in CCM.[1] But she believed that without the *Guru*'s help *bhakti* could not be meaningful.[2] Only the basically honest and pious men were predestined for *bhakti* worship.[3]

She made a distinction between conditional and unconditional worship. The latter was un-Vedic and unritualistic. It was the best form of worship inasmuch as ambition or selfish hankerings had no place in it.[4] The concept of predestination was, according to her, intimately related to that of virtue and vice. The virtuous person was not affected by it. Only the virtuous were the blessed.[5]

Jāṇhavā Devī recognised the five fundamental moods of placidity (*Sānta*), servility (*Dāsya*), friendship (*Sakhya*), filiation (*Vātsalya*), and 'unlibidinous' erotic love (*Madhura*). Rādhā was the fountain of all these moods. According to her, there were three types of erotic love, namely, ordinary type (*Sādhāraṇī*), mixed type (*Samanjasā*), and *capable* type (*Samarthā*). Only Rādhā and the milkmaids had the third type of love.[6] The *manjarīs* or the adolescent milkmaids felt a love for Kṛṣṇa which was the basis of their spirituality. Their mood Jāṇhavā Devī described as *Bhāvollāsarati*. By contributing their mite to the erotic pleasure of the divine couple, they themselves felt a pleasure which was seven times more intense than that of Rādhā.[7]

Jāṇhavā Devī described the four types of heroes and sixty-four aesthetic *rasas* in accordance with the principles laid down in Rūpa Gosvāmin's works and the tenth *Skandha* of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.[8] She believed that Vṛndāvana was the eternal abode of adolescent

1. MV, p. 89.
2. MV, p. 95.
3. MV, p. 95.
4. MV, p. 97.
5. MV, p. 98.
6. MV, pp. 100-101.
7. MV, p. 102.
8. MV, pp. 104-112.

Kṛṣṇa.[1] She also propagated the view that Caitanya, the golden-coloured youth, was Kṛṣṇa's *avatāra* for the *Kali*-age.[2] She defined Rādhā as the greatest bliss-attribute of Kṛṣṇa, and his *Hlādinīśakti* or the power which makes him capable of enjoying bliss. According to her man should always regard God as a beautiful and charming human being.[3] She also laid stress on the necessity of *manjarī* worship. Realisation of the supreme truth came from practising *bhakti* as an adolescent maidservant of Rādhā.[4]

The basic rituals of Rādhā-Kṛṣna worship were *Kāmagāyatrī* and *Kāmavīja* which could not be learnt without the *guru*'s guidance.[5] She preached the necessity of developing, stabilising, and gradually refining 'psychic' dedication, which she described as *Tatbhāvabhāvitāvasthā*.[6] The whole mind, including the sub-conscious mind, should be so trained that it would be incapable of deviating from the unending contemplation of God.[7]

Jāṇhavā Devī made a distinction between Rādhā and her female companions. Rādhā was the personification of love's quintessence or *Rasa*.[8] Her female companions were merely personifications of love.[9] Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa were consubstantial.[10] Rādhā could not be regarded as a promiscuous woman because she loved Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme God. Her love was 'capable' (*Samarthā*) and extra-marital, because extra-marital love was incomparably more intense than conjugal love.[11]

1. MV, pp. 114, 121.
2. MV, pp. 117-118.
3. MV, pp. 119-120.
4. MV. p. 123.
5. MV, p. 124.
6. MV, p. 125.
7. MV, p. 125.
8. MV, p. 128.
9. MV, p. 128.
10. MV, pp. 126-127.
11. MV, pp. 128-129. This point goes against Sukumar Sen's suggestion that Jāṇhavā Devī supported the theory of the 'licit' loves of Kṛṣṇa while she was sojourning in Vṛndāvana. Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 14.

Jāṇhavā Devī next described the mystic Vṛndāvana and gave a short hagiological account of the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins, the *Gopālas*, and some of the companions of Caitanya.[1] At first she said nothing about herself. On being pressed by Rāmacandra, she modestly admitted that she was really the incarnation of Ananga-manjarī, Rādhā's sister. On hearing this Rāmacandra grew highly ecstatic. He wept, rolled on the ground before her, and asked for her blessings.[2]

IV

Premadāsa wrote *Vaṃśīśikṣā* in 1716. He was a Vaiṣṇava of the Bāghnāpāḍā circle.[3] In all probability he belonged to a group of Bāghnāpāḍā Vaiṣṇavas who were no longer satisfied with the theories ascribed to Jāṇhavā Devī. In the first place she was a woman, and a woman's right to propound any theory or religious concept was challenged in VS. Premadāsa expressed his respect for her in the introductory verse, and his doubt in the credibility of the teachings of a Śūdra and/or a woman at the end of his work.[4] Secondly, some of the Bāghnāpāḍā Vaiṣṇavas felt the necessity of introducing into the concepts of the circle a radical element. One can only presume that the necessity of radicalising the ideas of the circle had some connection with the growing influence of the Sahajiyās during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. But the radical group of the Bāghnāpāḍā Vaiṣṇavas was not prepared to deviate fully from the orthodox line. In VS, Caitanya is the original formulator of the *Rasarāja* idea, which constitutes the theme of the work. There is in it not a single reference to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava biographies and theologies prepared in Vṛndāvana. But Premadāsa often makes it clear that he is fully conversant with

1. MV, pp. 137-40.
2. MV, p. 147.
3. VS, p. 206. "*Solasata Aṣṭatriṃśa Sakera Ganaṇe| Srī Srī Vaṃśīśikṣā-granthá Karinu Varṇana.||*
4. VS. p. 1, verse 5, and VS. p. 125 : "*Kāra Upadeśa Prabhu Grāhya Yogya Naya| Strī-Śūdra Patitabrāhmaṇera Vede Kaya||...Strījātira Upadeśe Kivā-nartha Haya| Dharma Artha Kāma Mokṣa Bhakti Ādi Kṣaya.||*

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's vocabulary.[1] VS was written only for those who were conversant with Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology, and yet supported the *Rasarāja* concept. Premadāsa mentions the Vaiṣṇavas who accepted the concept. They were Thākura Haridāsa of Pānāgarh (Burdwan?), Thākura Kṛṣṇānanda, who was a Kāyastha, a Brāhmaṇa named Vaḍu Thākura who lived in Sāldāngā-Mansabpur, Thākura Gokulānanda of Kātābanī, Thākura of Kogrāma-Ujānī (Burdwan), Rāmacandra, the Vaiṣṇava ascetic of Dhāmās, and Thākura Hari.[2] Premadāsa's own *Guru* at first took him to task for revealing the *Rasarāja* secrets.[3] He had to revise the original version in accordance with the instructions of his *Guru*.

V

Chapter I of VS is devoted to an explanation of the *Rasarāja* concept.[4] Premadāsa says that Caitanya practised two different types of Vaiṣṇavism. The first type was external. The second was internal. External Vaiṣṇavism or "social" Vaiṣṇavism consisted in *Kīrtana* singing and chanting of the sacred name. Internal Vaiṣṇavism consisted in the secret worship of *Rasarāja* Kṛṣṇa.[5]

In the *Rasarāja* hagiology Vaṃśīvadana was a peer of Advaita and Nityānanda mainly because he was the human incarnation of Kṛṣṇa's flute. It is said that he was born in Śaka 1416 (1494), and that just before renouncing the world Caitanya himself revealed the *Rasarāja* secrets to him.[6]

Conceived as *Rasarāja*, God Himself is the fountain of all *Rasas*. Apparently he sports with the wives of other men. But

1. For instance, VS. p. 81 : "*Nija Sukhaprati Icchā Tāre Vali Kāma.| Kṛṣṇasukhaprati Icchā Dhare Prema Nāma|| Kāmaprema Dohākāra Vibhinna Lakṣaṇa| Yaiche Malapurṇa Lauha Nirmala Kāncana.||*
2. VS. p. 202 : *Ei Aṣṭaśākhā Rasarāja Tattvācārya| Ihādera Vākya Sadā Vaiṣṇavera Dhārya||*
3. VS. p. 206 : *Grantha Paḍi Prabhu More Kana Krodhabhare| Āre Āre Premā Tui Kaili Sarvanāśa| Nigūḍa Bhajanatattva Karili Prakāśa.||*
4. VS. pp. 1-31.
5. VS. p. 2.
6. VS. pp. 4-8.

really he plays with his own wives.[1] The leader of the milk-maids is Rādhā. The other milkmaids are Rādhā's attributes.[2] *Śṛngārarasa* or the erotic *rasa* is the highest *rasa* with thirty-two distinct characteristics.[3]

Kṛṣṇa represents *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*. Rādhā is Kṛṣṇa's *Hlādinīśakti* or the power which makes him relish pleasure. She is the embodiment of *Ānanda* or Bliss.[4] The highest stage of Bliss is the psychic state of *Mahābhāva*, which is occasionally manifest in Rādhā.[5] The tremor of love (*Kaṃpa*), the tears of love (*Aśru*), the thrill of love (*Pulaka*), the unmoving depth of love (*Staṃbha*), the whispered feelings (*Asphūtavacana*), the madness (*Unmāda*), the paleness (*Vaivarṇa*), the sweat (*Sveda*), the stupefaction (*Jaḍatā*), these are Rādhā's ornaments.[6]

Purity is the hallmark of Kṛṣṇ's love, but its coital phase never ends.[7] Nanda, Kṛṣṇa's father, is the symbol of benediction. Yaśodā, Kṛṣna's mother, represents pure *bhakti*, as well as the "reputation" of a pure *bhakta*.[8] Vraja is the eternal, universal abode of bliss. Vṛndāvana is its zenith.[9] Vṛndāvana is beyond misery, human frailties, and physical death. It remains unattainable to those who seek God through action, cultivation of knowledge, and rituals.[10] Kṛṣna, *Puruṣa* (the Male Principle), and Rādhā, *Prakṛti*, (or the Female Principle) are ever present in Vṛndāvana.[11] Chapter II of VS deals with the *Puruṣatattva* (Male Principle) and other related topics. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme embodiment of the non-dualistic principle (*Advaitatattva*). He has five forms, namely, *Brahman*,

1. VS. pp. 10-11.
2. VS. p. 11.
3. VS. pp. 14-16.
4. VS. p. 17.
5. VS. p. 18.
6. VS. p. 18.
7. VS. p. 20 : *Kṛṣṇera Viśuddha Prema Ratnera Ākarā|...Prabhu Kahe Rasarāja Sudhīra Lalita| Nirantara Ratikriḍā Yānhāra Carita.||*
8. VS. pp. 20-24.
9. VS. p. 26.
10. VS. pp. 27-28.
11. VS. p. 31.

Ātman, Bhagavān, Guru and the Devotee.[1] *Brahman* is omnipresent. *Ātman* is soul, the kernel of the heart. *Bhagavān* is eternally sportive. The *Guru* is the redeemer of lost souls. Being a part of God, the devotee is an extra-ordinary being. Despite his human form, the *Guru* is divine. He may sometime seem to have gone astray. But even then he should not be criticised. In fact the *Guru* is infallible. In him are manifest all gods and goddesses. He is Kṛṣṇa's incarnation, and the saviour of the world.[2] The disciple must place him above his parents. If the *Guru* gets angry, the disciple is really done for. Nobody can save him from the fires of hell. But yet one has the right to repudiate a false *Guru*. A genuine *Guru* knows both the 'qualified' (*Saguṇa*) and the 'unqualified' (*Nirguṇa*) Brahman. This wise *Guru* is the father and mother of the truth-seeker. The *Guru* is immortal. Both life and mind are to be consecrated to him. He is to be worshipped in every conceivable manner. But the *Guru* himself is expected to practise what he teaches.[3]

Rādhā is the heart of the Female Principle. Her incarnations are qualitatively and quantitatively equal to those of Kṛṣṇa.[4] The queens of Kṛṣṇa and the milkmaids whom he loves represent two aspects of the Female Principle. The Female Principle has three related functions. The first and the best of them is the *Hlādinī*, or the function which generates the capacity to relish bliss. The next function is *Sandhinī*. It leads to materialisation and existence. The third function is *Saṃvit*, which represents pure consciousness. The Female Principle, equipped with these properties, is an attribute of Kṛṣṇa.[5]

Kṛṣṇa, Absolute Pleasure, is eternally united with Rādhā, Absolutely Pleasurable.[6] Kṛṣṇa, Existence, holds anything which is Exis-

1. VS. pp. 34-36.
2. VS. p. 37.
3. VS. pp. 37-43.
4. VS. pp. 47-48.
5. VS. pp. 51-52.
6. VS. p. 53.

tent. Kṛṣṇa, Knowledge, enables the world to know.[1] As Pure Knowledge Kṛṣṇa is untouched by illusion. But the kernel of Pure Knowledge is Self-Knowledge.[2] The Vaiṣṇava devotees are the attributes of the *Sandhinī*-function.[3]

Ātmavidyā, Self-Knowledge, is the *Āśraya* or the ultimate resort of the devotees. Self-Knowledge is the knowledge of the identification of the soul with the universal spirit of Kṛṣṇa, *Rasarāja*. This knowledge is deeper and higher than the knowledge of the endless, timeless Brahman.[4]

Bhakti is an attribute of *Hlādinī*-function. *Prīti* or love is the kernel of devotion. Devotion is not born of fear. It is born of love. The practice of *Prīti* is extremely difficult.[5]

Rasarāja and *Mahābhāva* are inseparable. But these universal principles may assume different forms. The cowboys of Vṛndāvana emanate from Kṛṣṇa. The milkmaids emanate from Rādhā.[6]

Chapter III of VS is devoted to an explanation of the forms of worship and related subjects. Caitanya describes himself as Kṛṣṇa *Rasarāja*. The *Guru* is also Kṛṣṇa. Caitanya, therefore, is both Kṛṣṇa and *Guru*. As *Guru*, Caitanya is to be worshipped with the consecration of the sense-organs. Such worship requires psychic preparations, which are technically known as *Ānukulya*. It means the state of preparednes.[7] *Ānukulya* admits of no pre-condition. It is not based upon any hope for the final liberation. *Ānukulya*-devotion has sixty-four characteristics. It is not different from unconditional and selfless love.[8]

Devotional Love produces indescribable pleasure even though

1. VS. p. 53.
2. VS. p. 53 : "*Ātmavidyā Arthe Ātmajñānā Ye Vākhāni.||*
3. VS. p. 54.
4. VS. p. 54.
5. VS. pp. 55-56.
6. VS. p. 62.
7. VS. pp. 67-71.
8. VS. pp. 69-71. p. 69 : *Indriyagaṇera Dvārā Kṛṣṇera Sevane| Nirmala Ānukulyā Bhakti Kari Māne.||*

it is not sought for.[1] This love is unritualistic.[2] Its aim is the enhancement of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. It is beyond human institutions and ethics.[3] All actions and their consequences are to be consecrated to Kṛṣṇa. All *Bhāvas* or moods are to be used in Kṛṣṇa-worship.[4] Ordinary mortals behave like rope-walking jugglers who perform a worthless balancing feat, carrying big jars on their empty heads. The jars they carry are full of poison. They watch their steps, think of the poison jars on their heads, and thus move about in this barbarous world.[5]

A devotee of *Rasarāja*-Kṛṣṇa pursues two contradictory value-schedules. His ways and motives are really incomprehensible. He is dumb, yet garrulous. He is deaf, and yet a sharp listener. He is blind, yet hawk-eyed. He lives all alone, and yet belongs to a vast crowd, He is lame. Yet he can carelessly walk on a rope, which is the rope of illusion. He smiles, but his eyes are tear-stained. He is both asleep and wide awake. He is both naked and fully clothed. He is both active and inactive. He has no hunger and thirst. Yet he eats and drinks. Though he is an orphan he lives with his parents. He has no children. Yet he is the bread-winner of the family, which consists of his wife and children. He has no ambition. Yet he performs rituals in an ambitious manner. He has no libido. Yet he indulges in coitus. In fact he makes the frog dance on the deadly cobra's hood. He has no social background. Yet he is a social man. Illusion cannot touch his soul, because it is veritably the home of Kṛṣṇa, *Rasarāja*.[6]

In effect, *Rasarāja* is a monotheistic concept. The *bhakta* of *Rasarāja* Kṛṣṇa does not worship any other god or goddess. The

1. VS. p. 71.
2. VS. p. 72.
3. VS. p. 72.
4. VS. p. 73.
5. VS. p. 74: "*Kumbhaśrenī Śire Dhari Vajīkaragaṇa| Rajjudiyā Nece Kare Gamanāgamana|| Dṛsti Tāra Rahe Pade Kumbhe Rahe Mana| Se Lāgi Tāhāra Śira Nā Naḍe Kakhana|| Pade Dṛṣṭi Rākhi Āra Kumbhe Rākhi Mana| Abhadra Saṃsāre Sadā Kariche Bhramaṇa.||*
6. Free translation of the verses in VS. pp. 75-76. This is a fine specimen of mystic, *Rasarāja* poetry.

Guru makes his disciple capable of understanding the spiritual meaning of the love of the mailkmaids. This love is unsullied by sex, though it is apparently similar to the sexual relation between a man and a woman. Caṇḍīdāsa was the greatest poet and philosopher of the Vṛndāvana sports.[1] He knew the significance of mystic love. One who realises the *Rasarāja*-nature of Kṛṣṇa is the real *Rasika*. The *Rasa* of the sports of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is deeper than *Rasa* born of the realisation of Brahman.[2]

Men and women have equal right to worship Kṛṣṇa as *Rasarāja*. Their worship consists mainly in the contemplation of the eternal sports of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The worshippers think of a beautiful lotus with eight petals which blooms in mystic Vṛndāvana. At the centre of the lotus stand Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Its eight petals are the eight female companions of Rādhā. Kṛṣṇa represents the male generative organ. Rādhā represents the female generative organ.[3]

The *Rasarāja* contemplation is strengthened by the performance of many rituals, each of which has a symbolic meaning. The rituals are those of ordinary worship. The *Guru* is the master of these rituals.[4] The devotee must think of his own psyche as the invisible but real Vṛndāvana. His heart is the mystic lotus with eight petals, whereupon Kṛṣṇa sports with Rādhā.[5]

Chapter IV of VS has two parts. The first part deals with mystic physiognomy and the social duties of a devotee. The second part contains the biography of Rāmacandra which is based upon materials given in MV. Vaṃśīvadanā is referred to as Anangamanjarī, Rādhā's younger sister.[6] Premadāsa, therefore, rejects the idea that Jāṇhavā Devī was Anagamanjarī.[7] The eight female companions of Rādhā are the different shades of Rādhā's *Hladinīśakti*.[8] The *manjarīs* are the different senses like the senses of sound,

1. VS. pp. 81-89.
2. VS. pp. 94-95.
3. VS. pp. 96-101.
4. VS. pp. 101-103.
5. VS. p. 109.
6. VS. p. 111 : "*Anangamanjarī Tumi Rāi Sahodarī*".
7. MV. p. 147.
8. VS. pp. 111-12.

touch, colour, smell, and taste. *Cit* or Consciousness is integrally connected with Kṛṣṇa's sports, in which Cupid or Madana plays an important part.[1] Cupid (may we say, like gout) resides in different sense-organs at different dates. The method of 'subduing' Cupid at these dates should be learnt from the *Guru*.[2]

It is not necessary for *Rasarāja*-worshipper to renounce the world. But one must have *Kṛṣṇadīkṣā* or Kṛṣṇa-initiation before he is entitled to worship Kṛṣṇa as *Rasarāja*.[3] Moreover, a *Rasarāja* Vaiṣṇava must ever remain faithful to his wife.[4] He must love and respect his friends. His relatives must be honoured by him as different gods and goddesses. He must practise hospitality. All human beings are to be loved and honoured as manifestations of Kṛṣṇa. The *Rasarāja* Vaiṣṇava must be a faithful husband and a good father. A Vaiṣṇava of this school must eschew hedonism.[5]

The various rituals of *Rasarāja* worship are then delineated. Shorn of mystic symbolism, these rituals are not different from those of the worship of Brāhmaṇical gods and goddesses.[6]

VI

Bimānbiharī Majumdār finds in this work some ideas which are, according to him, unmistakably Sahajiyā. One such idea is *Ānukulya-bhakti*. *Ānukulya* is, according to Majumdār, a Sahajiyā technical term which means the disciple's willingness or preparedness to permit his *Guru* to perform ritual coitus with his wife. Another Sahajiyā idea is that of the suppression of Cupid.[7] But *Ānukulya* is also used by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja.[8] According to the Kavirāja it means psychic preparedness for the worship of Kṛṣṇa. Premadāsa does not use the term in a different sense.[9]

1. VS. p. 113.
2. VS. pp. 113-14.
3. VS. p. 123.
4. VS. p. 123.
5. VS. pp. 125-26.
6. VS. pp. 126-130.
7. *Śrīcaitanyacariter Upādan*, p. 477.
8. CCM. Sāhitya Akademi ed. p. 353 : "*Ānukulye Sarvendriya Kṛṣṇānuśīlana*".
9. VS. pp. 69-70.

As for the theory of the subdual of Madana, nothing can be said here because it has not been elucidated by Premadāsa. The purely sexual aspect of the theory is explained in such works as *Anangaranga* and *Smaradīpikā*. Whether Premadāsa uses the term in a sexual sense is not definitely known. He advises the *Rasarāja* Vaiṣṇava to practise sexual discipline and conjugal fidelity. It seems that *Rasarāja* worship is basically contemplative like Tāntrika *Dakṣiṇācāra* (Right-handed worship). The introduction of the *Līnga-Yonī* symbolism in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship perhaps reflected Tāntrika-Vaiṣṇava syncretism in an age when the sectarian differences had been considerably toned down, and when Śiva-Durgā temples and Vaiṣṇava temples were built side by side by the patrons of these cults. The *Rasarāja* concept probably signified an attempt on the part of a particular Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava circle to accommodate certain select Sahajiyā concepts within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology. This attempt was made in the beginning of the eighteenth century probably because the Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇavas had infiltrated into the ranks of the Gauḍīya Vaṣṇavas. The only method of counterbalancing their growing influence was acculturation on a small scale. This is evident in the conceptualisation of the *Rasarāja* creed.

CHAPTER XVII

A SURVEY OF VAIṢṆAVISM IN EASTERN AND NORTHERN BENGAL

I

West Bengal and a part of north Bengal constituted the heartland of the Vaiṣṇava movement initiated by Caitanya. The *Gopālas* and the *Mahāntas* were active in West Bengal. Only a few of the *Mahāntas* hailed from eastern and northern Bengal. Literary evidence of the course and progress of Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal is more abundant in West Bengal than in the other regions of the province. Far more Vaiṣṇava temples were built in West Bengal than in east Bengal. The latest survey of the late mediaeval Vaiṣṇava temples of Bengal reveals the following data :[1]

District	*Number of Vaiṣṇava Temples Surveyed*
Bankura	64
Birbhum	13
Burdwan	57
Calcutta	1
Comilla	1
Coochbihar	1
Dacca	00
Dhanbad	2
Dinajpur	4
Faridpur	7
Hooghly	55
Howrah	13
Jessore-Khulna	16
Murshidabad	3
Mymensingh	1
Mayurbhanj	1
Pabna	5
Purulia	3
Rajshahi	6

1. Temples surveyed by D. McCutchion : Vide, *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal.*

District	*Number of Vaiṣṇava Temples Surveyed*
Rongpur	1
Midnapur	121
Nadia	5
24 Parganas	6

The assessment of the extent of the Vaiṣṇava influence in the Hindu society of eastern and northern Bengal should be based on the knowledge of local traditions which, in many instances, constitute merely unverifiable lore. It would, however, be only presumption to come to any conclusion with regard to the depth of the Vaiṣṇava movement in any particular area of Northern and Eastern Bengal simply from the existence or non-existence of Vaiṣṇava temples in that area. Many Śaiva-Śākta *zamindars* built numerous Vaiṣṇava temples. Like West Bengal the eastern and northern parts of Bengal, too, had many sects which adored Caitanya, and yet remained unrelated to the orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order.

Caitanya himself had travelled in eastern Bengal after his first marriage with a view to paying a visit to his ancestral home in Sylhet, and making money.[1] His biographers aver thāt he paid a visit to Rāmkelī village in Māldā on his way to Vṛndāvana.[2] At this village, which was a centre of Sanskrit learning, he met Sanātana and his brother Rūpa. It is certain that Caitanya was able to make an impact on the common people of the villages through which he made his long journey to northern India.

In at least thirteen districts of West Bengal, Vaiṣṇava fairs and festivals are held throughout the year. The common festivals are the *Rathayātrā* (observed in the Bengali month of Āṣāḍa) and the *Rāsayātrā* (observed in the month of Kārttika). The following

1. CBH, Ādikhaṇḍa, Ch. 12, pp. 83-89. p. 85 : "*Bangadeśe Gauracandra Karilā Praveśa| Adyāpiha Sei Bhāgye Dhanya Bangadeśa.|*
2. Acyutacaraṇa Tattvanidhi believed that Caitanya visited Sylhet after he had renounced the world. The basis of this belief was formed by the legends of the journey given in two apocryphal works entitled, respectively, *Kṛṣṇa-caitanyodayāvalī* and *Manahsantoṣiṇī*. Caitanya is said to have visited Dhākā-Dakṣiṇa, his ancestral village in Sylhet, in Śaka 1431 (1509). *Śrī-hatter Itivṛtta*, Part I & II, p. 118. Caitanya's visit to Rāmkelī village is described in CCM. *Kālnā* ed. *Madhyalīlā*, Ch. 16, pp. 409-411.

figures have been roughly computed from the lists given in the four volumes of *Paścim Banger Pūjā Pārvan O Melā* (ed. Aśoke Mitra):

District	*Number of Vaiṣṇava fairs and festivals held at different towns and villages.*
Bankura.	72
Birbhum.	33
Coochbihar.	24
Darjeeling.	1
Hooghly.	65
Howrah.	41
Jalpaiguri.	10
Malda.	10
Midnapur.	116
Murshidabad.	62
West Dinajpur.	13
24 Parganas.	128

Vaiṣṇava place-names may be an indication of the popularity of the religion in Bengal. The following data occur in a recent study of place-names in West Bengal :[1]

Villages of West Bengal named after Kṛṣṇa or his various appellations :

Jagannāthapura.	72
Puruṣottamapura.	36
Gopālapura.	142
Govindapura.	125
Gopināthapura.	65
Kṛṣṇapura.	86
Balarāmapura.	76

The other names which are frequently heard of are Mādhavapura, Śyāmapura, Kṛṣṇanagara, Śyāmasundarapura, Rādhāvallabhapura, Mathurāpura, etc. A few villages are named after Caitanya, Gaurānga, Vāsudeva, Nityānanda, Lakṣmī and Rādhā. Thirty-two percent of the Vaiṣṇava names are heard of in Midnapur. There are

1. Amiyakumār Bandyopādhyāya, ***Paścim Bānglār Grāmer Nām***, Calcutta : General Printers and Publishers **Ltd.** 1980. Ch. 3. For non-Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva and Śākta names see pp. 171-174.

eight hundred villages named after Rāma, three hundred nineteen villages named after Viṣṇu, and fifty-three villages named after Rādhā.

II

A sizable number of people, with whom Caitanya was intimately associated in Navadvīpa, hailed either from Sylhet or from Chittagong. Advaita Ācārya, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Candraśekhara Ācārya, Jagadīśa Paṇḍita, Murāri Gupta, stalwarts of the Caitanya movement in Navadvīpa, hailed fram Sylhet. *Gopāla* Dhananjaya Paṇḍita, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Mukunda Datta and Vāsudeva Datta hailed from Chittagong. Khagendranāth Mitra has suggested that *Kṛṣṇaism* was imported into Navadvīpa from Sylhet.[1] The fact that the Caitanya milieu in Navadvīpa was fundamentally a Sylhet-Chittagong milieu, in which Advaita Ācārya had a central position, remains indubitable. But, of pre-Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism in Sylhet, not much is known. The Śrīhatta Vaiṣṇavas certainly conformed to caste-rituals and Brāhmaṇical norms. In all probability Advaita Ācārya brought the men from Sylhet and Chittagong close to Vaiṣṇavism. They were converted into Vaiṣṇavism by the disciples of Mādhavendra Purī among whom Advaita and Īśvara Purī had a prominent position.

The *Śrīhattiyā* Vaiṣṇavas, resident in Navadvīpa, might have sought escape in the Caitanya movement after experiencing a great deal of misery during the proselytisations of Pir Shāh Jālāl. Shāh Jālāl's religious tyranny made the local Hindus quite desperate towards the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteeth.[2] Most of the conversions to Muhammadanism date from

1. Mitra's opinion quoted by Nirmalendu Bhowmik and Gurusadaya Datta in *Śrihatter Loka Sangīt*, pp. 6-7.
2. The main events of the conquest of Sylhet by the Muhammadans are summed up by N.K. Bhattaśālī in *Coins and Chronology of the Independent Sultans of Bengal*, pp. 150-151. Bengal including Sylhet and Tripurā were gradually conquered by the Muhammadans between 1292 and 1318 A.D. Wise describes the forcible conversions of Shāh Jālāl in "Muhammadans of Eastern Bengal", J.A.S.B., 1894, part III. See, also Acyutacaraṇa Tattvanidhi, op. cit. Vol. 2, Part II, pp. 30-35. According to W.W. Hunter, Sylhet was finally conquered by the Muslims in 1384. *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. 2, Sylhet, part II, pp. 30-35.

the reign of Shāh Jālāl-ud-din (1414-1430) "who was the only persecutor of the Hindus. The Hindus were readily converted because many of them desired to embrace a religion which proclaimed all men to be equal".[1]

The Caitanya movement, with its emphasis on social liberalism and egalitarianism, must have appeared as manna to a people who were leaderless in troublous times. Divyasiṃha, King of Lāuḍiyā in Sylhet, was coverted into the new faith by Advaita himself.[2] Very possibly the *Śrīhattiyās* of Navadvīpa found it impossible to maintain any viable link with their home district.

During the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries four influential Vaiṣṇava families, namely, the Thākurvāṇī, the Thākurjīvana, Vaiṣṇava Rāya, and Vancita Ghoṣa held the torch of the Vaiṣṇava movement aloft in Sylhet.[3] According to local tradition two Vaiṣṇavas named Mādhava Dāsa and Rāma Dāsa spread Vaiṣṇavism among the Hājongs of Susang-Durgāpur.[4] A Hājong leader named Pāthurā Hājong even went to Purī on pilgrimage.[5] The economic effects of the spread of Vaiṣṇavism in the Hājong tribal area are not known: but it is not difficult to surmise that agriculture in the area grew extensive, and that much jungle was cleared by the Vaiṣṇava tribals.

According to one authority Chitom Thombā, king of Maṇipur in Assam, and his subjects were converted into Vaiṣṇavism by the

1. F.A. Sachse, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Mymensingh, p. 36. According to Abu A. Ghaznavi, 30 percent of the Muhammadans of Mymensingh "are probably descended from Hindu and other converts". (Quoted by Risley and Gait, *Census Report of India*, 1901, I, p. 166.)
2. Divya Siṃha wrote a biography of Advaita entitled *Vālyalīlāsūtra*.
3. Acyutacaraṇa Tattvanidhi, op. cit. Vol. 3, part 3, Ch. 7, p. 303. Vancita Ghoṣa was the pseudonym of Gangārāma Ghoṣa whose biography was written by Rādhāramaṇa Dāsa. The title of the work is *Vancitacaritra*. It is yet to be published.
4. Ibid., Ch. 1, pp. 142-143. But were Mādhava Dāsa and Rāma Dāsa *Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas*?
5. GVA, Vol. 2, part 3, pp. 1281-1282. Pāthurā Hājong was initiated by Nityānanda and rechristened Jagannātha Dāsa. The Hājong renounced the world, and worked as a missionary. The Vaiṣṇavas of this tribe claim affiliation with the Nityānanda branch.

Adhikārī Vaiṣṇavas of Sylhet who were Brāhmaṇas. The conversion took place sometime after 1715.[1] King Bhāgyacandra of Maṇipūr was converted by Rāmanārāyaṇa Miśra, a descendant of Caitanya's uncle, who lived in village Dhākā Dakṣiṇa of Sylhet. The Maṇipurī Vaiṣṇavas, however, claim that they belong to the 'branch of Narottama'.[2]

The Vaiṣṇavas of Maṇipur have a very high regard for Caitanya. Hundreds of them visit Navadvīpa every year, and attend the festival held in commemoration of Caitanya's birth. A distinct *Gharānā* or school of *Rāsa* dance with a remarkably high degree of sophistication evolved in Maṇipur.

The great Vaiṣṇava leader of Assam, Śankara Deva, who developed a Vaiṣṇava theology and ritual which were different from the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava concepts, was probably acquainted with Caitanya.[3] According to Hunter, the Bengali gosvāmins, resident in Kāmarūpa or Assam, are known as the *Pārbatiyā*, *Nabā*, and *Nati* gosvāmins. They are quite different from the Assamese gosvāmins. They came to Assam at the invitation of the Ahom king Rudrasiṃha, who was converted into Hinduism in 1695 A.D.[4]

Vaiṣṇavism came to Tripurā towards the beginning of the seventeenth century. Rājadhar Māṇikya, king of Tripurā (1611-1623), was converted into Vaiṣṇavism. King Govinda Māṇikya (1658-1660) even visited Mathurā and Vṛndāvana.[5] The spread of the Vaiṣṇava

1. Dīnesh Chandra Sen, *Bṛhat Banga*, Vol. 2, p. 1096.
2. GVA, Vol. 2, p. 1919.
3. Śankara Deva worshipped Kṛṣṇa from the servile mood or *Dāyabhāva*. It has been suggested that Śankara Deva was influenced by Advaita Ācārya. But it is merely a hypothesis. There are many legends of the meeting of Caitanya and Śankara Deva. These legends enable Bimānbihārī Majumdār to come to the conclusion that the meeting might have taken place. *Śricaitanyacariter Upādān*, pp. 507-510, 512-518. Another scholar quite emphatically writes that "there was absolutely no influence of Caitanya on Śankara Deva. In fact they were poles asunder". H.V. Śrīnivāsa Murthy: *Vaiṣṇavism of Śankaradeva and Rāmānuja*, p. 235, Appendix-II. Murthy's view sounds simplistic,
4. Hunter, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 38.
5. *Bṛhat Banga*, Vol. 2, pp. 1035-36.

influence in Tripura, a hilly and tribal area, paved the way for the spread of Bengali culture among the local tribes. Dīnesh Candra Sen saw among them a tremendous enthusiasm for reading or listening to the recitation of classics like CCM.[1] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Rājā Vīracandra Māṇikya of Tripurā donated nearly a *lakh* of rupees for the publication of Vaiṣṇava works. The "Rādhāramaṇa Press" was set up in Baharampur (Murshidabad) specially for the printing of Vaiṣṇava works by Rādhāramaṇa Ghose, who was the private secretary to the Tripurā king.[2] Caitanya had many followers who hailed from Chittagong. But none of them is known to have settled in that place. Vaiṣṇavism was yet quite popular in that district. The evidence of its strength lies in the numerous Vaiṣṇava manuscripts discovered in the Chittagong district.[3] Many of these manuscripts are on *Rādhāviraha* or *Vāramāsyā*. The manuscripts were written by the local poets early in the eighteenth century. An anthology of seventy *Padāvalis* composed by the Hindu Vaiṣṇava poets of Chittagong have been recently published.[4]

The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa concept on a popular level, literary expressions of which are found in Sylhet, Mymensingh, Comilla and Chittagong, had nothing to do with the sophisticated Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology. In Chittagong Kṛṣṇarāma Datta composed *Rādhikāmangala*, a *Mangalakāvya* on Rādhā.[5] The ideas and the language of this work conform to the *Mangalakāvya* style.[6]

1. Ibid.
2. King Vīracandra Māṇikya composed a long *stotra* on Nityānanda. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, 1895, Vol. 7, pp. 289-291; 1896, Vol. 8, p. 289. The Vaiṣṇava priests of Tripurā claim that they belong to Nityānanda branch. Biography of Rādhāramaṇa Ghose in *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. 2, pp. 223-228.
3. These mss. are described in *Bāṅglā Prācīn Puthir Vivaraṇ*. (Parts I-II) by Ābdul Karim Sāhityaviśārada.
4. Āhmed Sharif, "Cattagrāmer Hindu Kavir Padasāhitya", *Bāṅglā Akādemi Patrikā*, ed. Mashārul Islām, Dacca, 16th year, No. 4, B.S. 1378 (1971), pp. 1-50.
5. *Rādhikāmangala* was published by the Vangīya Sāhitya Pariṣat in B.S. 1312 (1905).
6. Kṛṣṇarāma Datta might have been influenced by Bhavānanda, author of *Harivaṃśa*.

There are, however, no clear data on the Vaiṣṇava impact upon Mymensingh which was the largest district of undivided Bengal. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Kṛṣṇakumār Mitra, a Brāhma leader of Mymensingh, had to wage a propaganda campaign against the left-handed Tāntrikas, some of whom were patronised even by the respectable *Bhadralok* community.[1] Most of the territorial aristocrats of Mymensingh were Vārendra Brāhmanas whom an ethnologist describes as 'mildly Śākta'.[2] The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legend was, no doubt, popular. But there is scarcely any indication of the popularity of Vaiṣṇavism in Mymensingh. The bulk of the Hindu *bhadralok* of the district were "petty *talukdars* and tenure-holders who lived in inaccessible villages".[3] How many of them were initiated Vaiṣṇavas is not known.

There are, however, some isolated instances of Vaiṣṇava activity in Mymensingh. In about 1770 a rich merchant named Nandakiśor Prāmāṇik built a twenty-one-pinnacled temple of Laksmīnārāyaṇa at Kiśorganj.[4] In Mṛiga, some *Mahāntas* of Purī established a big estate covering most of the Khaliājuri Parganā.[5] Mādhava Miśra, a Vaiṣṇava poet of Saptagrāma (Hooghly), migrated to Navīnpur, a village on the Meghnā river. This village was renamed Gosāinpur and transformed into a Vaiṣṇava centre.[6] In Madhupur, where Buddhism once flourished, Rāṇī Hemantakumarī of Putiā, who was a devout Vaiṣṇava, built a temple where the image of Madanagopāla was installed.[7] In Bāṇīgrām, the descendants of Rūpanārāyaṇa, the Sanscrit scholar and court-*Paṇḍita*, who was converted by Narottama, built up an influential Vaiṣṇava

1. Kṛṣṇakumār Mitra, *Ātmacarita*, pp. 83-85. The Brāhmaṇas and Śāktas ostracised a Vaiṣṇava named Kṛṣṇakumār Basu who did not observe the caste-rules. Kṛṣṇakumār lived in Ālisākāndī village.
2. J.N. Bhattacharya, *Hindu Castes and Sects*, p. 34.
3. *Bengal District Gazetteers, Mymensingh*, p. 62.
4. *Bengal District Gazetteers, Mymensingh*, p. 33. Nandakiśor also built temples for Durgā and Śiva.
5. Ibid. p. 153.
6. *Gaurapadataranginī*, p. 222.
7. *Bengal District Gazetteers, Mymensingh*, p. 153.

Śrīpata.[1] The deviant Vaiṣṇava, 'Cuḍādhārī' Mādhava, established quite a powerful base in Yaśodal village of Mymensingh.[2] A "secret" (*Gupta*)) Vṛndāvana was set up in Mādhubanagarh near Tāngāil. It had numerous Vaiṣṇava images.[3]

III

It is interesting to note that not a single companion of Caitanya belonged to the Dacca district, Faridpur, or Barisal. Returning to Navadvīpa from his tour of East Bengal Caitanya is said to have ridiculed the peculiar language and intonations of the east Bengalis or *Bāngāls*.[4] Evidently Caitanya's travels in east Bengal went unnoticed. Much later Īśāṇa Nāgara, disciple of Advaita, and Caitanya's personal servant, was probably commissioned by Advaita to proselytise the people who lived in the villages of the western part of the Manikganj sub-division of Dacca and adjacent regions in Faridpur. An old man of seventy, Īśāṇa went to Teotā, a village in the Manikganj sub-division, and converted the local landlords. There he married and raised a family. The descendants of Īśāṇa Nāgara still claim the obedience of the *zamindars* of Teotā, the people of the river-port of Goālundo, and the neighbouring villages.[1] Some followers of Gadādhara Paṇḍita built up powerful bases in the Munshiganj sub-division of Dacca district. One of them was Vallabhacaitanya Gosvāmin. From West Bengal he came to Pancasār village in Vikrampur (Munshiganj sub-division) and set up a *Śrīpāta* in that important and populous village. His descendants gradually spread Vaiṣṇavism among the local Hindu peasantry.[5] "Kāṣṭhakātā (wood-cutter) Jagannātha, another disciple of

1. GVA, Vol. 2, p. 1950.
2. GVA, Vol. 2, p. 1932.
3. A 'melā' or fair is held here during the *Vāruṇīsnāna* festival. GVA, Vol. 2, p. 1920.
4. CBH, p. 88 : *Vangadeśī Vākya Anusaraṇa Kariyā| Bāngālere Kadarthena Hāsiyā Hāsiyā||*
5. *Gaurapadataranginī* : Intro. p. 18. Īśāṇa Nāgara is regarded as the author of *Advaitaprakāsa*.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita, set up a powerful *Śrīpāta* in the Kāthādiyā village of Vikrampur Parganā, and converted a good number of people in the neighbouring villages. The Kāthādiyā gosvāmins had considerable power in the nineteenth century. One of them was Harimohan Śiromaṇi, who had followers in Vṛndāvana, Navadvīpa and Purī.[1]

Vaiṣṇavism assumed the shape of a religious movement in Dacca proper when Vīrabhadra visited it. From a catalogue of the temples of Dacca district, Wise found that 74% of the population worshipped Kṛṣṇa in one or other of his numerous forms, and only 21% worshipped Kālī, Durgā or Śiva.[2] There is clear evidence of Vīrabhadra's and Nityānanda's influence among the non-Brāhmanical castes in Dacca city. The weavers of Dacca, creators of the world-famous 'Muslin', embraced Vaiṣṇavism. The conch-shell ornament-makers of Dacca, who belong to the caste of the *Saṃkhavaṇiks*, are mostly Vaiṣṇavas. Lālmohan Sāhā, a very affluent leader of the community, claimed that 'Vangavāsī' Caitanyadāsa, a mediaeval composer of Vaiṣṇava devotionals, was his ancestor.[3] From Dacca the Vaiṣṇava movement spread to the neighbouring villages like Sāvār and Dhāmrāi, where the *Rathayātrā* festival soon became highly popular.

According to local tradition a Vaiṣṇava gosvāmin named Bhikhan Lāl Thākur installed in Nārāyaṇganj five *Nārāyaṇacakras* and

1. It is said that Caitanya himself had once sojourned in Pancasāra village. The descendants of Vallabhacaitanya lived in Pancasāra, Vinodpur, Deobhog, Bāsāil, and Ichāpurā villages of the Munshiganj sub-division. GVA, Vol. 2, p. 1903. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. I, pp. 76-77, Vol. 2, pp. 409-419; Harilāl Chattopādhyāya, *Vaiṣṇava Vivṛti*, pp. 100-01, Himāngsumohan Cattopādhyāya, *Vikrampur*, Vol. 2, pp. 287-88.
2. Wise : *Notes on the Races, Castes, and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, p. 147.
3. B.C. Allen noted that a large proportion of the Hindus of Dacca city were Vaiṣṇavas. *Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers, Dacca*, (Vol. 5), p. 66. J.N. Bhattacharya, *Hindu Castes and Sects*. p. 85; Vangavāsī Caitanyadāsa was a disciple of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. *Gaurapadataraṅginī*, Intro. p. 169..

converted many people.[1] Gradually the river-port of Nārāyaṇganj became quite a sizable Vaiṣṇava centre. Bipincandra Pāl, the eminent Brāhma and nationalist leader, saw numerous Vaiṣṇava monasteries or *Akhḍās* in Nārāyaṇganj city towards the end of the nineteenth century. But these *Akhḍās* were transformed into cheap hotels.[2]

Kṛṣṇadāsa Mutsuddi, one of the affluent ancestors of the Basākhs of Dacca city, was probably converted into Vaiṣṇavism either by Vīrabhadra himself, or by one of his followers. Kṛṣṇadāsa installed the images of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa in a temple in the Nawābpur area of the city. The rich Vaiṣṇavas of Dacca, most of whom belonged to the 'trading' community, organised the *Janmāṣtamī* fair and procession, which soon made Dacca a popular Vaiṣṇava resort. In the Ekrāmpur lacality of Dacca there was a Vaiṣṇava monastery which was said to have been founded by Vīrabhadra himself.[3]

However, it was in the villages of Vikrampur Parganā that Vaiṣṇavism had to face the strong challenge of Brahmanical cults and rituals. The worship of Viṣṇu was not unknown to the Hindus of Vikrampur. Ancient Viṣṇu images were unearthed in no less than thirty-one villages of Vikrampur. There is epigraphic evidence of the prevalence of Viṣṇu worship among the 'betel-growers' of Vikrampur.[4] Since the 9th. century A.D. Brahmanical and Buddhist cults had been taking roots in that area. After the Muhammadan conquest of eastern Bengal the caste-system and the caste-rituals grew excessively rigid. Brāhmaṇa scholars and priests became unchallengeable social leaders with the support of the landowners, most of whom belonged to the high castes in Vikrampur and the adjoining parts of Faridpur. Buddhism was patronised by the peasants.

The Nātha cult, too, had numerous adherents among the low-

1. *Bānglāya Bhramaṇ*, Vol. 2, p. 44. Bipincandra Pāl: *Sattar Vatsar*: *Ātmajīvani*, Calcutta, Yugayātrī Prakāśaka, 1955, p. 150.
2. Ibid.
3. *Bānglāya Bhramaṇ*, Vol. 2, p. 56; GVA, Vol. 2, pp. 1877-78.
4. S.C. Mukherji, *A Study of Vaiṣṇavism in Ancient and Mediaeval Bengal*, p. 38 : "Pāikpāḍā Betkā Vāsudeva Image Inscription".

caste Jugīs and Namaśūdras.[1] It was, therefore, difficult for neo-Vaiṣṇavas like Īśāṇa Nāgara, Vallabhacaitanya Gosvāmin, and 'wood-cutter' Jagannātha to build up bases in the villages of the area. Ultimately the theological and ritualistic innovations of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas made it possible for them to make a compromise with the dominant Brāhmaṇas, and to secure for themselves the patronage of some leading *zamindars*.

According to local legend Vaiṣṇavism was brought to Yaśolong and neighbouring villages by a king named Nityānanda in 1665 or thereabouts. King Nityānanda is said to have given some Vaiṣṇavas *nānkār* lands, or lands in lieu of wage for service rendered by them.[2] Possibly the holders of the *nānkār* lands extended cultivation in the area which was mostly jungle.

Vaiṣṇavism made some headway in northern Vikrampur when the Kāyastha *zamindars* of Mālkhānagar began to support it towards the end of the eighteenth century.[3] Gradually the landlords of Śrīnagar, Lauhajang, Bhāgyakul, Rāutbhog and Haldiā patronised the gosvāmins who noticeably gained strength in such villages of Vikrampur as Bāhādurpur, Japsā, Rasuniā, Hāsāḍā, Beltalī, Śiāldi, Āriāl and Sonārang.[4]

A notable feature of the spread of Vaiṣṇavism in Vikrampur was that it was patronised by the Kāyastha, the Vaidyā and the Tili *zamindārs*, whereas the Brāhmaṇa *zamindārs* remained unshakably attached to Brāhmaṇical rituals. Vaiṣṇavism helped the non-Brāhmaṇa *zamindars* achieve vertical mobility. But this development did not bring about a social change. The Vaiṣṇava landlords, too, patronised the Brāhmaṇas and observed the caste-rituals. It is also interesting to note that in Vikrampur and south-eastern Farid-

1. The cult of Manasā is popular in village Gāruḍgāon. Kājirpāglā village was an ancient Buddhist centre. The Nātha cult was popular in villages Bānarī, Kumārbhog, Haldiyā and Sānihāti. Himāngśumohan Ghattopādhyāya, *Vikrampur*, Vol. 3, pp. 81, 121, 306, 441, 509.
2. Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 381.
3. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 141-188.
4. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 265-344, also, p. 257; Vol. 3, pp. 37, 140, 276-282, 316-318, 331, 388-394, 405, 478-79.

pur Lakṣmī, consort of Viṣṇu, and not Rādhā, whom Kṛṣṇa loved, enjoyed the adoration of the Vaiṣṇavas and non-Vaiṣṇavas. Lakṣmī worship grew highly popular throughout Vikrampur Parganā. It was patronised by the agricultural communities and the upper-caste Hindus with equal enthusiasm. The growing importance of Lakṣmī and the relegation of Rādhā to an inferior or obscure status in an area dominated by the Brāhmaṇas was presumably the result of a silent compromise between Vaiṣṇavism and the Brāhmaṇa *Paṇḍitas*.

Vaiṣṇavism in Vikrampur and Faridpur had to face the challenge of Śiva and Durgā worship. Most of the Brāhmaṇa and Vaidya *zamindars* were *Śakti*-worshippers. Towards the beginning of the nineteenth century the Tāntrika Brāhmaṇas of Dhānukā (Faridpur) made an attempt to convert the Vaiṣṇava *zamindārs* of Malkhānagar into the Śākta faith.[1] To some extent the attempt was successful. But most *zamindārs* of Vikrampur and Faridpur pursued the policy of sectarian co-existence. In Japśā village and Śrīnagar (Vikrampur), for example, temples were built by the *zamindārs* for both Śākta and Vaiṣṇava deities.[2] The people in general observed both the Vaiṣṇava and the Śaiva-Śākta festivals. The Tili *zamindars* of the river-port of Lauhajang were confirmed Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. They, too, supported the *Smārta* Brāhmaṇas.[3]

Brāhmaṇical influence throughout Vikrampur Parganā was so deep that even some Muhammadan landlords of the area courted the favour of the local Brāhmaṇa *Paṇḍitas*.[4] It is said that Caitanya's maternal uncle, who was known as Māmu Thākura, esta-

1. Himāṅgśumohan Chattopādhyāya, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 154.
2. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 247-264; Vol. 3, p. 331.
3. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 265-344. Candravinoda Pālchaudhurī of the Tili *zamindār* family wrote "Śrī Śrī Caitanyadeva O Premadharma" at the request of the Brāhmaṇa leader Paṇḍita Śaśadhara Tarkacuḍāmaṇi. This interesting dissertation is fully quoted in *Vikrampur*, Vol. 2, pp. 299-314. It was highly spoken of in a review published in *Sajjanatoṣaṇī* (1894), Vol. 6. pp. 177-78. There is a copy of the work in Bangīya Sāhitya Pariṣad, Calcutta.
4. *Vikrampur*, Vol. 2, "Kārtikapurer Munshi Caudhuri Vaṃśa". pp. 345-368.

blished a *Śripāta* in the Mukdobā village of Faridpur.[1] But he was a worshipper of Vāsudeva, and more a Brāhmaṇa *Paṇḍita* than a proselytising Vaiṣṇava.

IV

In Jessore-Khulnā many ancient Viṣṇu images were unearthed. Of the eastern districts Jessore and Khulnā are adjacent to Nadiā, the very heartland of the Vaiṣṇava movement. After relinquishing their state-jobs, Sanātana and Rūpa lived for some time in a Jessore village named Cengutiyā-Premabhāga.[2] The other villages around Premabhāga are predominantly Vaiṣṇava, and are under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the gosvāmins of Dakṣiṇakhaṇḍa. Lokanātha Gosvāmin of Vṛndāvana was born in the village of Tāleśvara in Jessore. The present name of Tāleśvara is Tālkhāḍi. Lokanātha was born in 1483. His father Padmanābha Cakravartī was acquainted with Advaita long before Caitanya's birth. Caitanya is said to have visited this village on his way to East Bengal.[3]

Yavana Haridāsa was born in Bhātpāḍā-Kalāgāchi village of Jessore sometime in the beginning of the sixteenth century. According to a local legend he was really a Hindu orphan brought up by an old Muhammadan. Haridāsa lived later in Benāpole village for eight years, braving the cruel persecution of Rāmacandra Khān, the Śakta-Tāntrika *zamindar* of the neighbouring village of Kāgajpukuriā. According to a Vaiṣṇava tradition even Nityānanda came to this village, and was humiliated by that *zamindar*.[4]

1. GVA, Vol. 2, 1928. The real name of Māmu Thākur was Viṣṇudāsa Thākura. He was the elder brother of Śacī Devī and the eldest son of Nilāmvara Cakravartī. This information is given in *Pāścātya Vaidika Vaṃśāvalī* ed. Śyāmācaraṇ Rāi and Śyāmāpada Bhattācārya, published by Pāścātya Vaidika Sangha, 35, Gokul Mitra Lane, Calcutta B.S. 1370 (1963), pp. 418 f. There was another Māmu Gosāin who belonged to the branch of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. CCM, Adi, Ch. 12, verse 80.
2. Satīsh Chandra Mitra, *Yaśohar-Khulnār Itihās*, Vol. I, pp. 381-391; GVA, Vol. 2, p. 1830; *Bānglāya Bhramaṇ*, Vol. I, pp. 209-10,
3. *Yaśohar- Khulnār Itihās*, I, pp. 392-397.
4. Ibid., I, pp. 398-411.

Kānāi Thākura (Śiśu Kṛṣṇadāsa), son of *Gopāla* Puruṣottama Dāsa Thākura, first set up his *Śrīpāta* at Bodhkhānā, near Jhikargāchā, in Jessore. Later he went to Garbhetā in Midnapur. A fair is held in Bodhkhānā on the occasion of the *Holī* festival. Just near this place is situated the village of Amritabāzār, the birth-place of Śiśir Kumar Ghoṣe and Matilāl Ghoṣe, who were devout Vaiṣṇavas, and founders of the *Amritabāzār Patrika*.[1]

Dayārāma, who is said to have been a direct disciple of Caitanya, lived in the village of Tāltalāhāt.[2] Sometime in the eighteenth century a Vaiṣṇava saint named Bālakadāsa Bābāji built up a monastery at Laupālā village near Yātrāpurī. Here the *Rathayātrā* festival is held every year.[3]

Jessore-Khulnā was a noted centre of Tāntrika worship. Sarvānanda Thākura, a notable Brāhmaṇa Tāntrika, and author of *Sarvollāsatantra*, (an authoritative Tāntrika work) migrated to Khulnā, where he lived in Senhāti village. He was originally an inhabitant of Mehār (near Chāndpur on the Meghnā river). The *Sarvollāsatantra* was composed in Senhāti, where its author was able to spread his faith among the local Vaidyas.[4] King Pratāpāditya, a powerful *Bhuiyān* of Jessore (born in 1560 or thereabouts) was a Śākta, though his father was a Vaisnava. Basanta Rāya, his uncle, was a follower of Caitanya. He is said to have composed many Vaiṣṇava songs.[5] Basanta Rāya, however, did not persecute the Śāktas. Ultimately Pratāpāditya cruelly murdered his uncle.[6] But there is also a record of Pratāpāditya's involvement in a war in Orissa over the possession of an image of Govinda which he brought to Jessore with the help of some Mughal generals.[7]

1. *Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, I, pp. 1920; Sundarānanda Dāsa, *Śrī Śri Caitanyacandrodaye Viśiṣṭa Tārakātraya*, pp. 85-96.
2. *Bānglāya Bhramaṇ*, Vol. I, p. 210.
3. Ibid., I, p. 211.
4. *Sarvollāsatantraṃ*, introduction, pp. 5-6, 28.
5. Basanta Rāya, Pratāpāditya's uncle, was different from the Brāhmaṇa *Padavālī*-composer Basanta Rāya, who was a disciple of Narottama and a friend of Govindadāsa Kavirāja. See, PKT, Vol. 5, p. 158.
6. Satīsh Chandra Mitra, op. cit. vol. 2, pp. 82-92, 274-281.
7. Ibid., pp. 253-273.

Rājā Sītārāma Rāya, warrior-*zamindar* of Muhammadpur, was deeply influenced by Vaiṣṇavism. He built a *Dolmanca*, a Kṛṣṇa temple, and another five-towered Harekṛṣṇa temple in Kṛṣṇanagar village.[1] Sītārāma was non-communal. The Vaiṣṇava Vaidyas of Gayeshpur, who were patronised by the *zamindars* of Naldāngā, were the disciples of the gosvāmins of Śrīkhaṇḍa in Burdwan.[2] Originally Śaiva, the majority of the Gandhavaṇiks and cultivating Pods of Jessore-Khulnā were gradually converted into Vaiṣṇavism. The Suvarṇavaṇiks of the two districts were Vaiṣṇavas.[3]

The depth of Vaiṣṇavism in Jessore-Khulnā may be to some extent measured with the help of the following archaeological data :[4]

1. The Vaiṣṇava *Matha* in Rāyanagara, built in 1588.
2. Ancient *Rāsamancas* and *Dolmancas* of uncertain date have been found in Muhammadpur, Sālnagar, Kātipāḍā (in Khulnā), Naltā (Khulnā), and Śunṛikhal (near the Sundarban).
3. Harimohan Bācchār, a rich member of the Pod community, built, at an uncertain date, a big *Rāsamanca* in Śunṛikhāl bāzār.
4. The Śyāmarāya temple of Cāncḍā.
5. The Kṛṣṇaji temple of Muhammadpur, Sītārāma Rāya's capital.
6. The old temple of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa in Mulgharā village.
7. Tne Kṛṣṇa temple of Dhalāgrāma.
8. The Śrīmandira at Lohāgarh, built by the local Cāklāvanī *zamindārs* (who were Brāhmaṇas).
9. The *Jorbānglā* Govinda temple of Daulatpur, Khulnā, built by one Gopīnātha Gosvāmin.
10. The *Aṣṭakoṇa* or eight-cornered Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa temple of Muhammadpur.

In Jessore-Khulnā, as in Mymensingh. Dacca, and Faridpur, Vaiṣṇavism was considerably influenced by Brāhmaṇical culture. But the so-called *Yaśoharasamāja* or Hindu society of Jessore did not always follow the *Smṛti*-rules of Raghunandana. Local customs often predominated over these rules.[5] But Brāhmanical culture in

1. Ibid., pp. 573-586 ; *Bangālāya Bhramaṇ*, Vol. I, pp. 232-233, also, Jadunāth Sarkār, ed. *The History of Bengal*, Patna ed. 1977. pp. 416-417.
2. Satīsh Chandra Mitra, op. cit. Vol. 2, pp. 470-486.
3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 275 ; Vol. 2, pp. 836-837.
4. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 851-868 : Only the notable temples and other edifices have been mentioned here.
5. Satīsh Candra Mitra, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 454.

Jessore-Khulnā was still very strong with its invariable stress on caste and rituals. The Śaivas and the Śaktas carried on collaboration with the conservative Brāhmaṇas and the Vaidyas. The Senhati Vaidyas were Śāktas with a few exceptions. Pratāpāditya was initiated as a Śākta votary by a Brāhmaṇa scholar named Kamalanayana Tarkapancānana. Rāmacandra Khān of Kāgajpukuriyā, a notorious landlord, was a Tāntrika. He insulted Nityānanda.[1] Everywhere in east Bengal Vaiṣṇava influence was localised, and remarkably well-adjusted to Brāhmaṇical values. It was perhaps through Brāhmaṇical intervention that the Vaiṣṇavas and the Śāktas adopted non-intervention as the guiding principle in their relation with one another. In no Tāntrika work (excepting *Tantraratnākara*) there is any denunciation of the Vaiṣṇava way of life. But the worshippers of Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu ordinarily preached monotheism. To them no god or goddess was higher than Kṛṣṇa. In their sectarian works like CBH and *Narottamavilāsa*, and the songs of Narottama, however, the Vaiṣṇavas rather strongly expressed their disapproval of the Śākta-Tāntrika way of life. But there is hardly any reliable record of any open conflict between the two great sects of Bengal.

The Vaiṣṇava-Brāhmaṇa compromise led to the Sanskritisation of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava movement, and also to the emergence of *High* and *Low* Vaiṣṇavism. The '*High* Vaiṣṇavas' generally belonged to high castes. The '*Low* Vaiṣṇavas' belonged to low castes, and supported numerous sects which were deviant.

V

The Kheturi festival was held by Narottama and other contemporary Vaiṣṇava leaders mainly with a view to spreading the Vaiṣṇava movement in north and east Bengal. The so-called territorial aristocrats of north Bengal were mostly Vārendra Brāhmaṇas and Śaktas. There is an interesting collection of Śakta devotional songs composed by sixteen *Rājās* and *zamindars* of Bengal in *Bāngālīr Gān*.[2] They were the *Rājās* of Kṛṣṇanagar, Kāndī, Nātore, Cooch-

1. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 412-417.
2. *Bāngālīr Gān*, ed. Durgādās Lāhirī, pp. 454-491.

bihār, Burdwan, Nāḍājol, Tāherpur, Susang-Durgāpur and Kākinā. Naracandra of Kṛṣṇanagar and Rāmakṛṣṇa, adopted son of the celebrated Rāṇī Bhavānī of Natore, were famous Tāntrika worshippers. During the Kheturi festival and immediately afterwards, only a few Rāḍī and Vaidika Brāhmaṇas, who were possibly Brāhmaṇical minorities in north Bengal, positively responded to the Vaiṣṇava appeal. Māldā, however, had already leaned towards Vaiṣṇavism after Caitanya had passed through this district on his long journey to north India. In some isolated villages like Kānāināṭśāl, where local artists had developed Vaiṣṇava puppet-shows, the popularity of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship even before Caitanya's advent was quite evident.[1] Caitanya stayed for a few days in Rāmkelī, a village near Gauḍa, and a centre of Sanskrit learning, and there met Sanātana, Rūpa and Keśava Chetry. Chetry was the Hindu army commander of the Sultān. Every year a Vaiṣṇava festival is held in Rāmkelī in the month of June to commemorate Caitanya's sojourn in the village.[2]

There was an idea that most of the Bengali speaking Hindus of Māldā professed Vaiṣṇavism, while the Hindī speaking Hindus were Śaivas.[3] The Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins of Gayeshpur spread Vaiṣṇavism among the Polis, the Bāgdīs, and other scheduled castes.[4] Jangalī and Nandanī, two disciples of Sītā Devī, were hermaphrodites. They set up a monastery in Jangolitolā, seven miles south-west of Māldā town, where the celibate Vaiṣṇava monks practise transvestism.[5]

It must be noted that Śaivism of a primitive type is highly popular in Māldā villages. The *Gambhīrā*-songs, which are sung by the Māldā peasants, depict Śiva as a handicraftsman, a peasant, and a householder. The *Śiva-Gājan* festival is held throughout Māldā on the occasion of the *Śivarātri*. In Māldā and in some parts of West Bengal, the Śiva cult was unquestionably associated

1. Sukumar Sen, *Nata Nātya Nātaka*, p. 98.
2. G.E. Lambourne, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Malda*, p. 30.
3. Ibid., p. 29.
4. Ibid., p. 29.
5. Ibid., p. 30.

with productive efforts, whereas Vaiṣṇavism was presumably an imported element. In Māldā, (as well as in Burdwan) Vaiṣṇavas of the low castes have not the slightest antipathy towards Śiva, the god of the peasants.[1]

The neighbouring district of Rajshahi was, according to *Narottamavilāsa*, a notorious centre of left-handed Tāntrika orgiasticism.[2] The powerful Vārendra *zamindars* were not initially prepared to patronise the Vaiṣṇava movement. The annual festivals in Kheturi were of immense help to the active gosvāmins in spreading the faith among the low castes. Rabīndranārāyaṇa Rāya, *Rājā* of Putiyā, was a Śākta. He was converted into Vaiṣṇavism by Rādhāmohan Thākur, a descendant of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, in 1750 or thereabouts. The robber-baron Cānd Rāi and his cohorts had already been converted by Narottama. The result of their conversion was the horizontal spread of the faith. In 1881 Vaiṣṇavas formed 16.13% of the population of the Rajshahi division.[3] In 1901 the distict of Rajshahi had 17,197 Vaiṣṇavas, who formed a distinct caste-organization. The organization was controlled by hereditary Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins who acted as judges of the caste. Offenders against the Vaiṣṇava rules of caste were ostracised.[4]

It was probably from Putiyā that Vaiṣṇavism came to the extensive holdings of the Balihār *zamindārs*, who worshipped Viṣṇu and observed the *Rathayātrā* festival.[5] The Vaiṣṇavas are not known to have ever attempted to convert the celebrated Rāṇī Bhavānī of Nātore who achieved great fame for spending nearly fifty crores of

1. J.C.K. Peterson, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Burdwan*, p. 55.
2. *Narottamavilāsa*, Ch. 7, p. 89 : The local Tāntrikas indulged in barbarism : *Keha Keha Mānuṣyera Kātāmuṇḍa Laiyā| Khaḍgakare Karaye Nartana Matta Haiyā||*
3. The legend of the conversion of Rabīndranārāyaṇa Rāya is given in *Bhaktamāla*, Ch. 18, pp. 255-72. The statistical figure occurs in *Report of the Census of Bengal* 1881 by J.K. Bourdillon, 1881, Vol. I, p. 137, Table 34; also Vol. 2, Table VIII, p. 239.
4. E.A. Gait, *Census of India*, 1901. Vol. VI B, Part III, Table III, p. 94; also, L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Rajshahi*, p. 58.
5. O' Malley, op. cit. p. 157.

rupees for religious endowments.[1] The Rāṇī worshipped Śiva, Kālī and Rāma. At a place named Māndā, Rāṇī Bhavānī's architects built a temple of Raghunātha in 1780. Rāmakṛṣṇa, her adopted son, was a practising Tāntrika.[2]

In the adjacent district of Pābnā the Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins were highly successful in converting the Mālo fishermen. The remains of an ancient *Dolmanca* in the village of Hati Kumrāil evidence the spread of Vaiṣṇavism in Pābnā in the sixteenth century.[3] The descendants af Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa, the *Gopāla* of Ākāihāt, developed an influential *Śrīpāta* in Sonātalā village of Pābnā, which became far more attractive than Kṛṣṇadāsa's original Ākāihāt *Śrīpāta*.[4] Tarās in Pābnā became a Vaiṣṇava village mainly because Vaiṣṇavism was liberally patronised by the local *zamindārs*, who were Vārendra Kāyasthas. Banamālī Rāibāhādur (1862-1914), an initiated Vaiṣṇava *zamindār* of Tarās, financed several successful projects for the publication of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava works, built a temple in Mathurā, and even tried hard to set up a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava University in Vṛndāvana.[5]

The district of Bogrā was once a notable centre of Buddhism and the Nātha cult. The chief centres of these faiths developed in Mahāsthāngarh and the neighbouring villages. The Śāktas, too, had considerable influence in such villages as Ādamdighi, Nasratpur, Tālorā, Dupcānciyā, Kuṇḍagrāma and Kāhālu-Kāsmipāḍā, where the Brāhmaṇas and the *zamindārs* supported the Śākta Tāntrikas.[6] Vaiṣṇavism, however, made some progress in the Bogrā villages during the seventeenth century.[7]

In Ārorā village near Mahāsthangarh lived a Vaiṣṇava poet named Vallabha (different from Harivallabha or Viśvānātha Cakra-

1. O' Malley, op. cit., p. 172.
2. O' Malley, op. cit., p. 172,
3. O' Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Pabna*, p. 118.
4. Sonātalā is situated on the river Ichāmatī. GVA, Vol. 2, pp. 1977-78.
5. *Jīvanī Koṣa*, Vol. 5, p. 1507.
6. *Banglāya Bhramaṇ*, Vol. 2, p. 8-16.
7. Ibid., pp. 8-15.

vartī), who wrote *Rasakadamva*, a Vaiṣṇava work on aesthetics.[1] *Rasakadamva* contains some valuable hints about the type of Vaiṣṇavism prevalent in some places of north Bengal. It was different from the faith preached by the Vṛndāvana gosvāmins and their Bengali followers. The work was composed in 1599.[2] Vallabha had some link, through his friend Mukuta Rāya, with the Śrīkhaṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas. But Uddhava Dāsa, his *Guru*, was a disciple of Narottama of Kheturi.[3] The striking feature of this work is its almost total obliviousness of the Caitanya movement. It begins with formal obeisance to Caitanya, Nityānanda and Advaita. But nothing is said in it regarding Caitanya's achievements. The subject of this work is Kṛṣṇa's life in Dvārakā, and it seldom mentions Vṛndāvana and the milkmaids. But the poet is indebted to Bhāgavatapurāṇa for many of his ideas and descriptions. The real heroine of this work is Rukmiṇī, King Kṛṣṇa's chief consort. The stories of creation given in the *Pātālakhaṇḍa* of the *Padmapurāṇa* and the third *Skandha* of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, are found to be metrically re-stated in it.[4] Kṛṣṇa describes himself as Śiva, and Rukmiṇī as his *Śākti*.[5] The *Jiva*-soul suffers for its own inadequacy. For its sufferings Kṛṣṇa or God cannot be held responsible.[6]

Vallabha describes the eternal Vṛndāvana in Chapter 10 of this work.[7] The description is based upon the account of the same in *Padmapurāṇa* and *Varāhasaṃhitā*.[8] Rādhā is mentioned only once.[9] The whole description sounds like that of a Tāntrika Buddhist *Maṇḍala* with its 'corners', 'directions' and 'doors'. The poet describes Kṛṣṇa as the divine lover or paramour of 4,00,000 women in

1. Ed. Tārakeśvar Bhattācārya and Āśutoṣa Cattopādhyāya, and published by the Bangīya Sāhitya Pariṣat in B.S. 1332 (1925).
2. *Rasakadamva*, introduction, p. 4.
3. Ibid., introduction, pp. 5-10.
4. *Rasakadamva*, Ch. 6, pp. 18-27.
5. Ibid., verse 361, p. 31.
6. Ibid., verse 368, p. 32.
7. Ibid., pp. 35-44.
8. Ibid., Introduction, pp. 25-33.
9. Ibid., verse 426, p. 36.

four "doors". These women are eternally young.[1] The *bhakti* of these women is 'disinterested'. Such devotion generates love of God.[2] Such love makes the Kṛṣṇa-worshipper capable of regarding himself as a woman loved by Kṛṣṇa. His mind becomes the mind of *Prakṛti*. Intense *bhakti* eventually leads to a psychic fusion of his masculinity with the universal female principle. Later he is re-incarnated as one of the 4,00,000 women of Vṛndāvana.[3] There is, of course, the method of worshipping Kṛṣṇa as a man. This is the method of *Nivṛtti* or Renunciation. The first method, leading to the fusion of the *Sādhaka's* masculinity with the universal female principle, is called *Pravṛttimārga* or the Way of Desire. It is better and spiritually far more meaningful than the way of Renunciation.[4] In verses 594-597 Vallabha describes the *Sakhībhāva* worship as the best form of worship.[5] The Vaiṣṇava householders are advised to practise religious charity to the best of their ability.[6] The poet, however, extols the virtue of *Śāntarati*. It is indicated as the highest state of libido, which is unalloyed by an infusion of egoism. The poet has also praised the concept of *Viraha* or separation from the beloved.[7] Vallabha does not mention the biographies of Caitanya written towards the end of the sixteenth century. But he acknowledges his debt to a work entitled *Śrīkṛṣṇasaṃhitā*.[8] His aim was to show that there was no natural difference between Brahman, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śakti.[9] The manuscripts of this work were found in Malda, Bogra, and Rongpur districts.[10] Very probably *Rasakadamva* was the basic text of a local sub-sect founded by Vallabha. After the Kheturi festival the sub-sect might have failed to gain any prominence. So the text remained undiscovered till the third

1. Ibid., verse 458, p. 39.
2. Verse 525, p. 44.
3. Verse 525-526, p. 39.
4. These ideas are elaborated in Ch. 12, pp. 46-50.
5. Ibid., p. 50.
6. Ibid., verses 580-583, p. 49.
7. Ibid., verses 620-625, p. 52.
8. *Rasakadamva*, Verse 22, p. 3.
   Ibid., verse 14, p. 2.
10. Ibid., introduction, pp. 1-3.

decade of the twentieth century. Vallabha tried to combine the Vṛndāvana and the Dvārakā sports of Kṛṣṇa. This attempt surely did not help him get the support of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, to whom the Dvārakā sports were insignificant. According to Nagendranāth Basu *Rasakadamva* was a Sahajiyā text. But the ideas expressed in it do not have any Sahajiyā flavour. The devotee is asked to worship Kṛṣṇa as a wife or a female companion of Rādhā. The spirit manifest in it is akin to that of the *Gauranāgara* songs of Narahari Sarkār. The poet's view of *Śāntarati* as the highest stage of devotional love was quite different from the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava version of the *Śāntarasa* and *Śāntarati*.

VI

The Rāma cult had considerable strength in some areas of Rongpur district like Kuḍigrām and Gāibāndhā, where the Rāmāyets had some bases. *Gopīcandrer Gān*, a *Kāvya* of the Nātha cult, was supposed to have been composed in Wāḍī village in Rongpur.[1] In the adjacent state of Coochbihar the Śaivas and the Śāktas were definitely in a prominent position. God Śiva is said to have sported, like Kṛṣṇa, with the women of the Koca tribe. The legend of the loves of Kṛṣṇa certainly influenced the legend of Śiva's extramarital love of the so-called *Kucinī*-women.[2] However, according to Walter Hamilton, the Kolitās of Coochbihar, who were Vaiṣṇavas, and who belonged to the tribe of that name, spread Vaiṣṇavism in Assam.[3] The kings of Coochbihar patronised the Brāhmaṇical cults, including Viṣṇu worship. Possibly the Vaiṣṇavas could make some headway in Coochbihar during the rule of King Harendranārāyaṇa (1783-1839) whose *durbur* library had some works of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sect.

1. *Bānglāya Bhramaṇ*, Vol. II, pp. 19-21; also *Mayanāmatīr Gān*, ed. Nalinīkānta Bhattaśālī and Baikunthanāth Datta, (Dacca Sāhitya Parisad, B.S. 1321/1914), introduction.
2. This theme is one of the principal subjects elaborated in *Yoginī Tantra* (ed. Rasikmohan Cattopādhyāya).
3. W. Hamilton, *Description of Hindostan*, Vol. I, p. 215.

Francis (Buchanan) Hamilton surveyed the district of Dināj̇pur in 1807. The report of the survey is given in *Eastern India: The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics*, by Montgomery Martin (3 vols. 1838) (Indian Reprint. 1976. Vol. 3, pp. 724-756 and p. 929). The following account of Vaiṣṇavism in Dināj̇pur is mainly based on this report, which is admirably informative.

Many Vārendra Brāhmaṇas of the district were followers of Advaita. The Rāḍī Brāhmaṇas claimed affiliation to the Nityānanda branch. Both Vārendra and Rāḍī Brāhmaṇa gosvāmins observed the caste-rules, and had numerous Śūdra disciples.[1] Most *zamindars* of Dināj̇pur were Kāyasthas, and most of them patronised the Śākta-Tāntrika priests.[2] The exception was the Kāyastha Rājā of Dināj̇pur, who belonged to a Vaiṣṇava family. Rājā Prāṇanātha Rāya of Dināj̇pur built the famous Kāntaji temple of Kāntanagar. This temple was not inferior to the very best temples of Viṣṇupur. According to local tradition the wonderful panels of this temple were decorated by the renowned experts of Kṛṣṇanagar, Nadiā. According to J.N. Bhattācārya, the image of Rukmiṇī in this temple was an evidence of the presence of the 'Śrī' sect in this area.[3] But in all probability Rukmiṇī merely showed the growing adjustment between the Brāhmaṇas and the Vaiṣṇavas.

In Dināj̇pur and Rongpur the low-caste Pātnis, Bhuimālīs, and a section of the Mucīs (cobblers) had Vaiṣṇava *gurus*.[4] But the worship of Kālī, too, was extremely popular; even some of the local Muhammadans "propitiated" her,[5]

A Vaiṣṇava gosvāmin named Atalbihārī, who lived in Giyāshpur (Purnea), had an annual profit of twelve thousand rupees, His office and rank were hereditary.[6] Some of the Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins acted as upholders of social morality. They could punish their

1. Martin, *Eastern India*, Vol. 3, pp. 731-733.
2. Ibid., p. 736.
3. J.N. Bhattācārya, *Hindu Castes and Sects*, p. 355. Bhattācārya thought that it was a 'Nimāyet' temple.
4. *Eastern India*, op. cit., pp. 737-739.
5. Ibid., p. 749.
6. Ibid., p. 750.

low-caste disciples "for transgressions against the rules of caste, by fine and excommunication".[1]

Dināǰpur had also numerous followers of the Rāmāyet sect. Dināǰpur town had a big *Rāmānandī* monastery, "with an original endowment of 45 *bighas* of land", and a *Mahānta*.[2]

The "Bostams" were exceedingly numerous in the district. They were of three types, namely, "persons who had lost all their relations", "widows who have had children", and common prostitutes, "who repent of their profession". By paying the gosvāmins only one rupee and eight *ānnās* anybody could become a member of the '*Boṣtam*' order. Among the Vaiṣṇavas there were both householders and ascetics without any family.[3]

The singing of *Kīrtana* was a lucrative profession in north Bengal. Some Vaiṣṇavas were highly literate. The ascetic Vaiṣṇavas lived in monasteries.[4] A *Kīrtana* party consisted of a leader and four assistants. Dināǰpur had nearly one hundred and fifty *Kīrtana* parties.[5]

According to Walter Hamilton some gosvāmins (gossāins) of Dināǰpur were merchants "who purchase large quantities of silk and cotton cloths, and import chintzes, carpets and Patna blankets",[6] In the adjoining district of Pūrṇeā (now in Bihar), the right to occupy land according to requirements was granted to "Bairagees, Sannyassies, Vishnuvies and Fakeers".[7]

Unfortunately the Vaiṣṇava missionaries who spread the faith among the tribal peasants of Rongpur and Dināǰpur are no longer identifiable. But surely their proselytising endeavour led to the spread of agriculture in these districts on a large scale. The aforementioned Kolitā Vaiṣṇavas spread the faith among the Rābhā, Gāro and the Mech tribes living in the border regions of north-east Bengal and Assam.[8]

1. *Eastern India*, op. cit., p. 751.
2. Ibid., p. 753.
3. Ibid., p. 755.
4. Ibid., p. 755.
5. Ibid., p. 929.
6. *Description of Hindostan*, 1, p. 224.
7. Ibid., p. 235.
8. Ibid., p. 215.

VII

At Saidābad, north of Khāgrā (Murshidabad), Harirāma Ācārya Kavirāja, a disciple of Rāmacandra Kavirāja,[1] founded a powerful *Śrīpata*. He worked in league with Hemalatā, daughter of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya. Hemalatā lived with her husband Gopījanavallava Cattarāja in Budhuipāḍā village. Saidābād and Budhuipāḍā are separated by the Bhāgīrathī river. Hemalatā had many disciples. Yadunandana of Mālihātī or Meleti village, who wrote *Karṇānanda*, was a disciple of Suvalacandra, Hemalatā's nephew.[2]

The great Vaiṣṇava theologian Viśvanātha Cakravartī (1626-1708) was born in Devagrāma village on the border between Murshidābād and Nadiā. He was a Rāḍī Brāhmaṇa. Viśvanātha came to Saidābād, and there became a pupil of Gangānārāyaṇa Cakravartī, who was one of the important disciples of Narottama, Viśvanātha was initiated by Kṛṣṇacaraṇa, who was a disciple of Gangānārāyaṇa Cakravartī.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī was the leading Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theologian of Bengal in the seventeenth century. He was a householder, but he renounced the world in his middle age. He was the preceptor of Jagannātha Cakravartī, father of Naraharī Cakravartī, the author of BRK. Viśvanātha wrote many commentaries and *Kāvyas*. His principal works are the following :

A Commentary on the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.
A Commentary on the *Gītā*.
A Commentary on the *Ānandavṛndāvanacampū of* Karṇapūra.
Commentaries on the *Vidagdhamādhava*, *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, *Dānakelikaumudī*, and *Lalitamādhava* of Rūpa Gosvāmin.
A Commentary on the *Brahmasaṃhitā*.
Śrīkṛṣṇabhāvanāmṛtamahākāvyaṃ.
Camatkāracandrikā
Stavāmṛtalaharī, and
Kṣaṇadāgītacintāmaṇi.[3]

1. *Karṇānanda*, Ch. 2, p. 26; *Narottamavilāsa*, p. 190.
2. *Karṇānanda*, Ch. 2, pp. 27-28.
3. Nanīgopāl Gosvāmī, *Vaiṣṇavācārya Viśvanātha*, Prācyavāṇī Sārvajanīna Granthamālā-9. Published by Jatīndravimal Chaudhuri, Calcutta B.S. 1356 (1949); also *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. I, pp. 133-34.

Kṣaṇadāgītacintāmaṇi was the earliest anthology of *Padāvalī*-songs in which fifty-one of the songs composed by Harivallabha, *alias* Viśvanātha Cakravartī, were included.

Viśvanātha was an ardent supporter of the *Parakiyā* theory.[1] Another very important Vaiṣṇava of Murshidābād was Rādhāmohan Thākur, who was a descendant of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya. Rādhāmohan was born in Mālihāti, Murshidābād, in 1697, and died in 1778. Mahārāj Nandakumār, who was sentenced to death by hanging by Elijah Impey (1775), was a disciple of Rādhāmohan Thākur. In Kunjaghātā, where Nandaknmār lived, there is a valuable collection of old Vaiṣṇava paintings.

Rādhāmohan's disciple Gokulānanda Sen (Vaiṣṇava Dāsa) prepared the great PKT anthology. Rādhāmohan himself had set the example by preparing, with Sanskrit notes, a big anthology of 301 *Padāvalī* songs. This anthology was entitled *Padāmṛtasamudra*. Rādhāmohan is said to have defeated the supporters of *Svakiyā* theory in an open debate. He was also the *Guru* of Rabīndranārāyaṇa Rāya of Putiyā (Rājshāhī).

According to local legend, the city of Murshidābād derived its name from Mukhasūdana Dāsa, a local Vaiṣṇava saint, and a prominent builder of *Ākhḍās* or monasteries.[2] In Kongārpāḍā, a village near Motijhil in Murshidābād, a Vaiṣṇava centre was organised by a nun named Haripriyā Thākurāṇī, who was said to have been initiated by Jīva Gosvāmin himself. So great was her influence that Nawab Noājes Muhammad Khān of Murshidabad became the chief patron of the local Vaiṣṇavas.[3] Most probably Devī Siṃha, a friend of Warren Hastings and a tyrannical tax-collector, was converted into Vaiṣṇavism. At Nasīpur, where he founded a very large estate, his descendants still observe the Vaiṣṇava festivals of *Jhulana* and *Tulasīvihāra*.[4]

The Jaina Seths of Mahimāpur established their headquarters

1. Viśvanātha Cakravartī was regarded as the incarnation of Rūpa Gosvāmin. Vide, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, *Srī Śrī Suratakathāmṛtaṃ*, introduction, p. 1.
2. *Bānglāya Bhramaṇ*, Vol. I, p. 271.
3. Ibid., p. 283.
4. Ibid., p. 286.

in Jiāganj. Some of them became Vaiṣṇavas in the eighteenth century. Later they were re-converted into Jainism. Jiāganj was gradually transformed into one of the most important centres of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism by Gangānārāyaṇa Cakravartī and his disciples. Here lived a reputed Vaiṣṇava *Yogin* named Sadānanda or Mastarām, who was admired and honoured by Nawab Ālivardi Khān, Rāṇī Bhavānī, Rājā Udayanārāyaṇa of Baḍanagar, and the Rājā of Mahiṣādal in Midnapur.[1]

Another important Vaiṣṇava centre in Murshidabad was the Teliābudhurī village near the river-port of Bhagavāngolā. Teliābudhurī was the scene of hectic Vaiṣṇava activity during the last two quarters of the sixteenth century. The Vaiṣṇavas of this place were supported by the affluent merchants of Bhagavāngolā. The *Rājās* of Lālgolā, adjacent to Bhagavāngolā, were devout Vaiṣṇavas.

Still another Vaiṣṇava village in Murshidabad was Taiyāṇ-Vaidyapur, the birth-place of Vaiṣṇava Dāsa, compiler of PKT. A *Padāvalī* composer named Dvija Haridāsācārya lived in the adjacent village of Kāncangariā.

Cossimbazar, one of the big trade centres of Murshidabad, had many Jaina merchants who had migrated to this place from Rājasthān. They built here the temple of Neminātha. But the local low-caste Bengali traders were either Vaiṣṇava or supporters of the Vaiṣṇava *Mahāntas*. The *Rājās* of Cossimbazar, who belonged to the Tili caste, patronised the Vaiṣṇavas.[2]

Kānta Bābu, the founder of the Cossimbazar family, was the disciple of Bhaktānanda, a Mahānta of Śrīkhaṇḍa. The Cossimbazar family observed numerous Vaiṣṇava festivals, and worshipped

1. *Bānglāya Bhramaṇ*, Vol. I, pp. 286-87.
2. Somendra Candra Nandi gives a good account of the economic development of Cossimbāzār in "Bandar Kāsimbāzar", *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, B.S. 1374 (1967), No. 1-4, pp. 89-129. The same scholar gives further detail of the Vaiṣṇavism of "Kānta Bābu", founder of the Cossimbāzār family, in "Sei Vikhyāta Kānta Bābur Duiti Hisāber Bai" *Aitihāsik*, I year, No. 4. October 1979, pp. 28-54. Kānta Bābu's *guru* was one Bhaktānanda. p. 33.

Kṛṣṇa. They bore the expenses of *Mahotsava*, and *Kīrtana*. Special scholars were appointed for the recitation of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. Kānta Bābu even spent money for the installation of the idol of Raghunathji, which was brought from Pancakot. Eight *Paṇḍitas* were appointed by him for the regular *yapa* of the 'name' of Kṛṣṇa. Only vegetarian meals were cooked. A Vaiṣṇava dormitory (*Samājabāḍī*) was founded.[1]

VIII

The inadequate survey given above makes it plain that the spread of the Vaiṣṇava faith in Bengal was one of the important results of the Caitanya movement. Slowly but surely Vaiṣṇavism became an essential element of the Bengali way of life. Unfortunately we do not have any reliable data concerning the many difficulties of the Vaiṣṇava pioneers. The methods they had adopted to overcome them are also unknown. Obviously one of the methods of spreading the faith in peace was collaboration with the landlords and the Brāhmaṇas. Such collaboration was unavoidable. Even Nityānanda could not gain any foothold in Kāgajpukuriyā and Benāpol in Jessore-Khulna because of the opposition of the local landlord, Rāmacandra Khān, who was a Tāntrika. But one may yet say that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *Mahāntas* found it easy to make a compromise with Brāhmaṇical culture because they were protected by their own *Smṛti* and religious sophistication. Those Vaiṣṇavas whose commitments were more extensive, and who were compelled to mix with heterogeneous elements, gradually grew 'deviant'.

The Vaiṣṇava ladies like Hemalatā Thākurāṇī and Haripriyā Gosvāminī symbolised the advent of a new age when the upper caste Bengali ladies might no longer be *Asūryampaśyā*, invisible to the sun. Their contributions to the spread of Vaiṣṇavism in areas, where elements hostile to the Vaiṣṇava ideal were active, can never be overestimated.

Very possibly the preparation of anthologies in the seventeenth

1. These data have been supplied by Somendrachandra Nandi, op. cit.

and the eighteenth centuries had some connection with the spread of the faith. The *Kīrtana* became highly popular throughout Bengal. The common listeners did not care for the style. They were moved by the human appeal innate in them. Still another cultural result of the spread of Vaiṣṇavism was the construction of a very large number of Vaiṣṇava temples. Temples were built by both the rich patrons and common people. Temple-building produced social mobility.[1]

Towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the census figures showed an unmistakable decline in the number of Vaiṣṇavas. People were moving about in search of jobs. Many people presumably changed their Vaiṣṇava caste for a higher caste status in view of the persistent Brāhmaṇical animosity towards the Vaiṣṇava caste.

1. Hiteshranjan Sānyal, "Temple Promotion and Social Mobility in Bengal", in *Essays in Honour of Professor Niharranjan Ray*, pp. 341-371. Sānyāl shows that quite a large number of 'Nabasāk' and other castes built temples between 1700 and 1900. During this period the upper castes built 678 temples and the lower castes also built 568 temples. See figures given in p. 362. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult was undoubtedly the main inspiration behind the revival of Hindu art and architecture. D. McCutchion, op. cit., p. 1 f. See also, Hiteshranjan Sānyal: *Social Mobility in Bengal*, Calcutta, Papyrus, 1981, pp. 33-64; III, pp. 65-81.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RITUALISTIC AND CEREMONIAL SYNTHESIS

I

Haribhaktivilāsa was the most comprehensive compendium of Vaiṣṇava rituals. It even contained architectural and iconographic specifications of immense historical value.[1] The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana had to make out a case which might be acceptable to the regional upper castes. They had to tone down the egalitarian implications of *bhakti*. This was done by Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin in *Haribaktivilāsa*. The most remarkable feature of this work is its emphasis on *Vaidhibhakti* or 'ritualistic' devotion. The caste-ridden Hindu society of Upper India was not prepared to accept *bhakti* without clearly articulated rituals, because non-ritualistic *bhakti* might be a menace to the social and religious predominance of the Brāhmaṇas. In the very first *Vilāsa* of *Haribhaktivilāsa* (ed. with the 'Digdarśaṇī' commentary of Sanātana Gosvāmin, and translated into Bengali, by Rāmanārāyaṇa Vidyāratna, Murshidabad, Rādhāraman Press, 2nd. ed. 1891) Gopāla Bhatta made it clear that only the *Brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇavas were permitted to initiate disciples belonging to all castes. (p. 21, verses 36-37). He put stress on devotion for Viṣnu, and not for flute-playing Kṛṣṇa. (p. 23, verse 41). Gopāla Bhatta supports the view that the Śūdras could earn, 'white money' only by serving the Brāhmaṇas. (verse from *Viṣṇudharmottara* quoted in p. 889). A Brāhmaṇa was not to eat any food offered by the Śūdras. (p. 889). Any gift bestowed on a Brāhmaṇa was *ipso facto* consecrated to Viṣṇu. (p. 1159). A man belonging to the upper castes might expiate the sin of seeing a Caṇḍāla outcaste, a theist, and a *Yavana* by simply looking at the sun. (ibid. p. 1387). Rāma worship, which was extremely popular in Upper India, is prescribed in *Vilāsa* XIV as a ritual of the Rāmanavamī day. Emphasis was laid on the feeding of Brāhmaṇas and the bes-

1. *Haribhaktivilāsa*, Chs. 18 and 19. Many iconographic specifications are given in these two chapters.

towal of several types of gifts on them. (*Vilāsa* XIV. p. 88 f.). It is very doubtful if Gopāla Bhatta faithfully represented the social ideals of Caitanya. No biographer of Caitanya has suggested that Caitanya propagated Brāhmaṇa worship in the name of Vaiṣṇavism. There is no evidence of Caitanya's hatred of Caṇḍālas and other outcastes. Yet *Haribhaktivilāsa* might have made it known to the local Brāhmaṇas and aristocrats that Caitanya's creed was based upon conservative and Brāhmaṇical norms.

To the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal, however, Gopāla Bhatta's work was not of much use mainly because it had no provision for the worship of Caitanya. The rituals of Caitanya worship gradually evolved in Bengal with sectarian variations. The idea of the *Pancatattva*, first enunciated by Svarūpa Dāmodara,[1] turned out to be the basic Vaiṣṇava ideology in Bengal. Shorn of the elemental or universal symbolism, the *Pāncatattva* doctrine established the primacy of the Bengali leaders over the Vṛndāvana group. It was said that the five *tattvas* or principles were represented by Caitanya, Nityānanda, Advaita, Śrīvāsa, and Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Locana Dāsa added to the *Pancatattva* list the name of Narahari Sarkār.[2] But Locana's suggestion was not generally accepted by the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal.

The Vṛndāvana leaders did not try to debunk the *Pancatattva* doctrine. Any attempt to debunk it might have rendered the gulf between Navadvīpa and Vṛndāvana unbridgeable. *Pancatattva* did not create any difficulty for the Kṛṣṇa worshippers. It was merely a local interpretation of the Vaiṣṇava hagiology. But even in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temples certain rituals, such as singing of *Kīrtana* and *Mahotsava*, with their stress on *Gauracandrikā* and the intermixing of castes, grew fashionable. The gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana tried to lend sophistication to the Caitanya movement. But the unprecedented social mobility generated by the Vaisnava movement in Bengal to a great extent inhibited the 'Sanskritisation' of the rituals.[3]

1. GGD, verses 6-12, pp. 9-11; CCM, Kālnā ed. Ādilīlā, Ch. 7, pp. 104-115.
2. *Caitanyamangala, Sūtrakhaṇḍa*, p. 3-4.
3. The remarkable social mobility in post-Caitanya Bengal has recently been studied in depth by Hiteshranjan Sanyal : See, his *Social Mobility in Bengal*, (Calcutta, Papyrus, 1981), pp. 58-64.

Every genuine Vaiṣṇava in Bengal, including the different varieties of Sahajiyās and the Bāuls, worshipped Caitanya. But Caitanya worship had no generalised rituals. The Śrīkhaṇḍa Vaiṣṇavas and the followers of Gadādhara Paṇḍita infused into Caitanya worship the spirit of 'libidinous' mysticism. Siddha Caitanyadāsa, a famous Vaiṣṇava mendicant of the nineteenth century, regarded himself as Kṛṣṇa's or Caitanya's wife. He considered Bhagavāna Dāsa of Kālnā as a co-wife, and bitterly quarrelled with him on the ground that he was trying to entice Kṛṣṇa/Caitanya away to Kālnā ! Bhagavān Dāsa had the sense of humour to advise Siddha Caitanya Dāsa to keep a close watch on the movements of Kṛṣṇa/Caitanya who was reported to have visited, in a surreptitious manner, many other "wives" !1

The followers of Nityānanda might have adhered to the friendly point of view. The followers of Advaita, on the other hand, began to attach a primary significance to his role. This was evident in biographies like *Advaitaprakāśa*, *Advaitamangala*, *Vālyalīlāsūtraṃ*, and *Sītāguṇakadaṃva*. The *Pancatattva* doctrine signified an attempt to unify the different views by establishing the equality of the cardinals. Those who did not support the doctrine became deviant Vaiṣṇavas.

Even among the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas there were men who were not prepared to accept the theory of the equality of Caitanya's cardinals. The followers of Gadādhara Paṇḍita, for instance, believed that he was the incarnation of Rādhā. Sometime in the seventeenth century, Rādhākṛṣṇa Gosvāmin, a leader of the "Gadāi-Gaurānga" sect, wrote a ritualistic work called *Sādhanadīpikā*.2 This work was regarded as a genuine compendium of the specific rituals of the sect even by the influential Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana.3 In all probability the Vṛndāvana Vaiṣṇavas had to form an alliance with the followers of Gadādhara Paṇḍita who had considerable

1. "Siddha Caitanyadāsa Bābāji", in *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. 2, p. 91.
2. Edited and published by Haridāsa Dāsa, who belonged to the Gadādhara Paṇḍita school of Vaiṣṇavas.
3. *Sādhanadīpikā*, introduction, pp. 1-2.

nfluence in Burdwan, Birbhum, Midnapur and Dacca. But many Vaiṣṇavas found it either impossible or impractical to worship Caitanya and Gadādhara Paṇḍita as the incarnations of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. The CCM had already depicted Caitanya as the *singular* incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugality. Those who believed in this theory might have found it difficult to accept Gadādhara Paṇḍita as Rādhā's incarnation.

In Navadvīpa the relatives of Viṣṇupriyā Devī and their descendants popularised Viṣṇupriyā worship. A 'thousand names' (*Sahasranāma*) were coined for her, and rituals of her worship were invented. Viṣṇupriyā worship was considered as important as that of Rādhā.[1]

There was also the unending theological controversy on the nature of Kṛṣṇa's loves. The majority of the Vaiṣṇavas believed that Kṛṣṇa was the paramour of the milkmaids. The rituals of Kṛṣṇa worship generally conformed with this idea. But some Vaiṣṇavas, including Jīva Gosvāmin, regarded Kṛṣṇa as the husband of the milkmaids. The rituals of the *Svakiyā*-ideology were different from those of the *Parakiyā*-concept. The *Svakiyā*-rituals were not accepted by the majority of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. The minority viewpoint might have been reflected in the conservative spirit of *Haribhaktivilāsa*. It was stated in *Sādhanadīpikā* that Jīva Gosvāmin had enunciated the *Svakiyā* doctrine in *Śrīkṛṣṇasaṃdarbha* in accordance with the request of a *Vaiśya* (merchant) disciple named Gopāla Dāsa.[2]

II

What was necessary was, therefore, a synthesis of the different rituals. The synthesis could be easily worked out within the ambit

1. *Śrī Śrī Viṣṇupriyāsahasranāma Stotra*, by Haridāsa Gosvāmī, B S. 1329 (1922). Recently Nanīlāl Sen has put forth the argument that it is logical to regard Viṣṇupriyā as the incarnation of Rādhā. He writes : "So, we can safely reiterate our conclusion that Rasarāja and Mahābhāva are Gour and Viṣṇupriyā respectively". "The Import of the Rasarāj-Mahābhāv Equation", *Ācārya Rādhāgovinda Nāth Smārak Grantha*, p. 20.
2. *Sādhanadīpika*, p. 260 : *Tatra Śiṣyaparamparāśravaṇamāha,—Gopāladāsanāmā Ko'pi Vaiśyah Śrī Jīvagosvāmīmīpādānāṃ Priyaśiṣyah. Tatprārthanāparavaśena Tena Svakiyātvaṃ Siddhāntitaṃ.*

of the *Parakiyā* theory which was supported by the majority of the Vaiṣṇavas. But the problem which really foxed the Vaiṣṇavas was one of effecting a viable juxtaposition between Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya on the one hand, and Vṛndāvana and Navadvīpa on the other. The problem of equation was partially solved by the stress on contemplation, remembrance and analysis (*Smaraṇa, Manana, Nididhyāsana*). Both Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya 'sported'. Since Caitanya was the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, his 'sports' might very well be brought within the ambit of the *Smaraṇamangala* formula of Rūpa Gosvāmin.

A Vaiṣṇava saint named Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābāji, who lived in Vṛndāvana, ultimately effected the synthesis. His aim was to enable the Vaiṣṇavas to follow *Rāgānugā* rituals without any hitch. Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābāji was born in Orissa in the third decade of the eighteenth century. He went to Vṛndāvana and became a pupil of Vaiṣṇava Dāsa, the compiler of the PKT anthology. Kṛṣṇadāsa belonged to the 'branch' of Narottama. He lived in Jaipur (Rājasthān) nearly for a decade. He returned to Vṛndāvana, and became the disciple of a hermit named Jayakṛṣṇa Dāsa. He mastered the Vaiṣṇava scriptures and achieved renown for his great scholarship.[1]

Following Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābāji's instructions his disciple Kṛṣṇadāsa II prepared the following works :

1. *Bhāvanāsārasaṃgraha.*[2]
2. *Gutikā.*
3. *Gauragovindārcaṇasmaraṇapaddhati.*[3]
4. *Sādhanāmṛtacandrikā.*[4]

The first part of *Gauragovindārcaṇasmaraṇapaddhati* deals with the rituals of Kṛṣṇa worship. The second part, entitled *Sādha-*

1. Biography of Siddha Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābāji in *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. 2, pp. 1-9.
2. Edited and published by Haridāsa Dāsa.
3. Edited and published by Rādhāmādhava Dāsa.
4. Edited and published by Vṛndāvana Dāsa. The rituals of Caitanya worship prevalent in Vṛndāvana are stated in *Śrī Śrī Vrajadhāma O Śrī Gaura Mantropāsanā* ed. Govardhana Dāsa. Published in Calcutta by Kānāilāl Dutta, 1971.

nāmṛtacandrikā, established the synthesis between Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya in a ritualistic background. This synthesis grew popular even in the Vṛndāvana milieu towards the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. The synthetic movement might have been first sponsored by Vaiṣṇava Dāsa, whose PKT anthology has specimens of Vaiṣṇava poems composed by poets of diverse Vaiṣṇava sub-sects. Kṛṣṇadāsa II's compilation of the "contemplations of the sports of Kṛṣṇa" in *Bhāvanāsārasaṃgraha* is a very rich one. The *Smaraṇamangala* verses were collected for this anthology from more than thirty sources.[1] The anthology attached considerable weight to the purely contemplative aspects of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. The emphasis on *Smaraṇa*, Remembrance, naturally led to the simplification of the rituals.

III

As an incarnation of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa was acceptable not only to the Brāhmaṇas but also to the Śāktas. But the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava emphasis on the paramourhood of Rādhā was misunderstood by the conservative elements. The Rādhā concept was grossly misused by the Sahajiyā *Gurus*, who invented the theory of *Āropa* or Attribution, which was used for the attribution of Rādhā's qualities to their female disciples, and the qualities of Kṛṣṇa to themselves. The gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana and their followers in Bengal had popularised the worship of *manjarīs*. A time came when the *manjarī* maidservant of Rādhā looked more important than Rādhā herself. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ascetic was expected to practise penance as a *manjarī* or *Sakhī* (female companion) of Rādhā. A very respectable and scholarly Vaidika Brāhmaṇa of Barisāl, named Gopālakṛṣṇa Bhattācārya, wore the dress of Lalitā, Rādhā's principal companion, and achieved great renown not only for his tremendous

1. See, *Śrī Śrī Bhāvanāsāra Saṃgraha* Text, and Translation into Bengali, by Gurucaraṇa Dāsa, published by Haridāsa Dāsa, Navadvipa, Haribol Kutir, 2nd. ed. 1983. The total number of Sanskrit verses collected in it is 3091. The anthologist seems to have shown proper respect for the poetical works of Kavi Karṇapūra and Viśvanātha Cakravartī.

patience, scholarship and *Brahmacarya*, but also for his unimpeachable imitation of the interesting behaviour-pattern attributed to *Sakhī* Lalitā.[1] A rival concept was that of 'brotherly' or 'friendly' adoration. An ascetic named Siddha Gauracaraṇa Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja, who lived in Vṛndāvana during the first half of the nineteenth century, regarded himself as Rādhā's "elder brother".[2]

Rādhā was worshipped mainly by the followers of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Their rituals of Rādhā worship are laid down in the sixth chapter of Rādhākṛṣṇa Gosvāmin's *Sādhanadīpikā*.[3] These rituals are deeply influenced by the left Tantras. The *Dhyāna* of Rādhā has been extracted from *Urdhāmnāya*.[4] In one verse Rādhā is described as a young lady with a predilection for "coitus in reversed role".[5] In this verse Rādhā looks very much like Kālī or Nīlatārā who had, according to the left Tantras, a similar predilection. The *Gopeśvarīsādhanā* (as stated in *Ūrdhāmnāya*), the *Pancavāneśvarīsādhanā* (as stated in *Ūrdhāmnāya*), and the Tāntrika *Rādhāyantra* (as stated and schematically drawn in *Ūrdhāmnāya*), are mentioned *Sādhanadīpikā*.[6] This work makes it plain that Gadādhara Paṇḍita and his followers were deeply influenced by Tāntrika *Vāmācāra* concepts. In Chapter 7 of *Sādhanadīpikā* an attempt has been made to present the worship of the Gadādhara Paṇḍita school as the best of all other forms of Vaiṣṇava worship.[7] It has been claimed that Gadādhara Paṇḍita was the greatest cardinal of Caitanya.[8]

The left Tāntrikas considered it unexceptionable to worspip Rādhā as a manifestation of the Universal Female Principle. They ascribed to Rādhā a highly esoteric character, which greatly inhibi-

1. Biographical sketch of Lalitā Sakhī in *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana* Vol. III, pp. 374-386. Lalitā Sakhī's wonderful patience is described in *Caritasudhā*, by Rāmdās Bābāji, Vol. 4, "Lalitā Dāsīr Punarjanma", pp. 219-231.
2. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. 2, pp. 78-81.
3. *Sādhanadīpikā*, pp. 127-165.
4. Ibid., pp. 132-133.
5. Ibid., p. 135, verse 5 : *Kṛṣṇapriyā Kṛṣṇasakhī Viparītaratipriyā*' etc.
6. Ibid., pp. 126-165.
7. *Sādhanadīpikā* : pp. 166-204.
8. Ibid., p. 188 : *Śrībhagavatkṛṣṇacaitanyadevasyāntarangaśaktivargamūkhyatamah Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍitah*, etc.

ted the development of popular interest in her worship. The Tāntrikas even composed a *Tantra* on Rādhā, titled *Rādhātantraṃ*. In this work Kṛṣṇa is described as an expert Tāntrika worshipper who performs his secret *Kulācāra* or secret Tāntrika rituals with the help of Rādhā, his Tāntrika *Śakti*.[1] It is said that Kālī ordered Kṛṣṇa to perform ritual coitus with Rādhā.[2] A modern interpreter of the left Tantras has claimed that Rādhā worship was designed to invigorate Tāntrika culture which was once essentially the culture of Power (*Śakti*) without *Bhāva* or human feeling.[3]

Siddha Kṛṣṇadāsa and his disciples simplified the rituals of Rādhā worship, and gave them a Brāhmaṇical colour, so that they might be acceptable to the Brāhmaṇical elements. These rituals are mentioned in *Sādhanāmṛtacandrikā*, wherein Rādhā is given the highest position in the hierarchical order. Her female friends and *manjarīs* are recognised as lesser divinities.[4] The worship of Rādhā is described in this work as the worship of a Brāhmaṇical goddess with a Vaiṣṇava orientation.[5]

IV

The nature of the Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya and Vṛndāvana-Navadvīpa synthesis finalised by Siddha Kṛṣṇadāsa and his disciples may be determined by studying the following contents of *Sādhanāmṛta-candrikā*.

Chapter 1 : *Duties at the early hours of the Morning* : 53 *sections*. pp. 1-37.

Singing of *Kīrtana*.
Salutation to the *Guru*.
Salutation to *Pancatattva*, Navadvīpa and the Gangā river.
Salutation to Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, and their companions.
Salutation to Balarāma, Yaśodā, Nanda, Rohiṇī, Vṛkabhānu, and Kīrtidā.[6]
Salutation to Rūpamanjarī and other *manjarīs*.

1. *Rādhātantraṃ*, pp. 160-162.
2. Ibid., p. 162 : "*Rādhayā Saha Re Putra Kuru Krīḍāṃ Yapaṃ Kuru*" Verse 12 of Ch. 14; also, Ch. 17, pp. 180-181, verses 13-15.
3. Surendramohan Bhattāchārya, *Rasatattva O Śaktisādhanā*, pp. 616-610.
4. *Sādhanāmṛtacandrikā*, pp. 28, 59-63.
5. Ibid., pp. 69-75.
6. Vṛkabhānu and Kīrtīdā were Rādhā's parents.

Salutation to Paurṇamāsī, Vṛndādevī, Tulasī, Vṛndāvana, the Yamunā river, the Govardhana mountain, the Śyāmakuṇḍa, the people of Vṛndāvana, and the Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana.
Beginning of the *Kīrtana* on the early morning sports of Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa.
Contemplation of the state of Kṛṣṇa at sunrise.
Utterance of the name of Hari according to the required number of times.
Once again salutation to the Vaiṣṇava *Gurus*.
Performance of the Vaiṣṇava *Ācamaṇa*.
Bath.
Prayer to the *Guru* before and āfter bath.
Contemplation of Kṛṣṇa.
Smearing of *Tilaka* markings.
Visit to the temple of Hari.
Worship of the Idol.
The temple utensils are washed.
Flowers and leaves are plucked.

Chapter 2 : *Morning Duties*. 30 *sections*. pp. 38-77.

Tulasī leaves are plucked.
The procedure of worship is settled.
The Conch-shell and the Bell are placed.
Water is sprinkled on the Idol.
The morning sports of Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa are remembered.
The *Guru* is worshipped.
The *Dhyāna* of Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa.
Worship of Caitanya.
The *Dhyāna* of Nityānanda.
Worship of Nityānanda.
The *Dhyāna* of Advaita Ācārya.
Worship of Advaita Ācārya.
The *Dhyāna* of Gadādhara Paṇḍita.
Worship of Gadādhara Paṇḍita.
Dhyāna of Śrīvāsa.
Worship of Śrīvāsa.
Obeisance to the Vaiṣṇava *Gurus*.
Dhyāna of, and obeisance to, the female *Guru*.
Contemplation of the soul.
Contemplation of Kṛṣṇa.
Contemplation of the eight female companions of Rādhā
Contemplation of Vṛndā Devī, the presiding deity of the Vṛndāvana woods.
Contemplation of the *manjarīs*.
Worship of Kṛṣṇa.

Worship of Rādhā.
Recitation of devotional poems.
Worship of a Vaiṣṇava.
Worship of the Tulasī leaf.

Chapter 3 : *Duties of the Forenoon.* 2 *sections.* pp. 77-78.

Remembrance of the forenoon sports of Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 4 : *Duties of the Noon.* 5 *sections.* pp. 78-90.

Bath.
Offering of food to the Idol.
Worship of the *Tulasī* leaf.
Salutation to the *Guru.*
Listening to *Kīrtana* composed in Brajabulī language.
Eating of the left-over of the Idol.

Chapter 5 : *Afternoon Duties.* 2 *sections.* pp. 90-91.

Chanting of names according to a fixed number of times.
Listening to the recitation of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa and Bhaktiśāstra.*
Remembrance of the afternoon sports of Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 6 : *Evening Duties.* 2 *sections.* pp. 91-92.

Bath.
Wearing of *Tilaka.*
Rousing the Idol from slumber.
Offering of *Vālyabhoga* to the Idol.
Remembrance of the evening sports of Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 7 : *Duties at the early hours of Night.* 3 *sections.* pp. 93-94.

Remembrance of the sports of Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa at the early hours of night.
Offering of food to the Idol.
The Idol is laid to rest.

Chapter 8 : *Nocturnal Duties.* 2 *sections.* pp. 94-101.

Remembrance of the nocturnal sports of Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa.
Recitation of relevant poems, as given in *Bhāvanāsārasaṃgraha* and other *Samraṇamangala* works, dealing with prayer to the *Manjarīs.*

V

Some of the salient features of the rituals mentioned in *Sādhanāmṛtacandrikā* are as follows.

Remembrance of the 'sports' of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya is not simultaneous. At first the sports of Caitanya are contemplated. The cardinals of the Caitanya movement in Bengal have been partially deified. Considerable importance has been attached to Navadvīpa and the

Gangā river. The singing of *Padāvalī* songs composed in the Brajabulī language is regarded as a religious duty. The rituals of Rādhā-worship have been redeemed from the Tāntrika leaven and simplified. While stress is laid on *Guru* worship, the worship of the *manjarīs* is regarded as an item of lesser importance. The chief disciples of Kṛṣṇadāsa II were Nityānanda Dāsa, Balarāma Dāsa, Madhusūdana Dāsa, Bhagavān Dāsa of Kālnā, and the millionaire Bengali *zamindar*, Lālā Bābu. Bhagavān Dāsa of Kālnā was a great leader of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas during the second half of the nineteenth century. These Vaiṣṇavas seriously worked for the unity of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sect.[1]

It should be noted that "Remembrance of the Sports" was the most important item in Kṛṣṇadāsa's systematisation of the Vaiṣṇava rituals. It was the most essential precondition to the observance of the rituals. At first some Vaiṣṇavas failed to realise its significance. Siddha Madhusūdana of Sūryakuṇḍa, Vṛndāvana, wrote a letter to Kṛṣṇadāsa II seeking clarification on certain points. He wanted to know the exact positions of Nityānanda, Advaita, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Śacī Devī, Jagannātha Miśra and Śrīvāsa. He expressed his surprise at the exclusion of the six gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana, and Śrīnivāsa Ācārya from the ritualistic scheme. He also wrote that some people of Vṛndāvana did not care for the *mantra* of Caitanya. Unfortunately Kṛṣṇadāsa's reply to this letter was disappointingly short and vague.[2]

"Remembrance" solved many problems. A householder Vaiṣṇava could very well perform his worldly duties while contemplating the sports of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya. He was not always required to count the beads of the *Yapa*-rosary. It was now easy for landlords, traders and middlemen to pose as *Tilakadhārī* (decorated with *Tilaka*-markings) and 'contemplative' Vaiṣṇavas. The simplification of the rituals made Vaiṣṇavism extremely popular as a soteriological concept. "Remembrance" made the Vaiṣṇava rituals quite different from the Brāhmaṇical rituals, which could hardly be observed without the assistance of professional priests. In the rituals

1. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. 2, p. 15.
2. Ibid., pp. 202-205.

of *Sādhānāmṛtacandrikā* neither the priests, nor caste has any place. The ecclesiastical primacy of the *Guru* was not challenged. Perhaps that was why the priests had to be eliminated from the rituals. The Brāhmaṇas, however, found it difficult to get accustomed to Vaiṣṇavism without priests. Between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries hundreds of Vaiṣṇava temples had been built in Bengal. The idols of these temples required priestly care. Priests were needed for big Vaiṣṇava ceremonies like *Dolayātrā*, *Rathayātrā*, *Janmāṣṭamī*, and *Rāsayātrā*. These were all big social functions which required assistance and Brāhmaṇical patronage. The Brāhmaṇas also introduced the worship of Śālagrāma stones.

The Brāhmaṇical version of the Vaiṣṇava rituals is given in *Kriyākāṇḍavāridhi*.[1] In the third volume of this work no less than two hundred and fifty-four items of *Vaiṣṇavācāra* (Vaiṣṇava conduct) have been listed and described. Most of these *Ācāras* have been gleaned from the Vaiṣṇava mythologies, the *Institutes*, and *Haribhaktivilāsa*.

VI

Certain specific rituals were laid down for male and female Vaiṣṇavas, regardless of caste, who wanted to become mendicants. Later these rituals were selected and laid down in a systematic manner in a work entitled *Veṣāśrayavidhih*.[2]

According to this work a Vaiṣṇava who accepted *Veṣa* or *Bheka* was not required to observe the caste-rituals.[3] *Veṣa* might be taken up on any day at any time.[4] The Vaiṣṇava, who was willing to have *Veśa*, had first to seek the blessing of his *Guru*. He was to observe the following sacraments or sacramental duties.[5]

1. Fasting.
2. Head-shaving.

1. *Kriyākāṇḍavāridhi*, Vol. 3, pp. 525 ff.
2. Translated into Bengali by Rāmnārāyaṇ Vidyāratna and published by Vrajanātha Miśra, in Murshidabad.
3. *Veṣāśrayavidhih*, p. 8.
4. Ibid., p. 12.
5. Ibid., pp. 12-24.

3. Bath in holy water.
4. He/she was to wear a garland of *Tulasī* beads.
5. Smearing of *Tilaka* marks.
6. He/she was to wear *Mudrā*-markings.
7. Re-christening.
8. Constant conformity to the *mantra* given by the initiating *Guru*.
9. He was to wear the *Kaupīna* loin-cloth. This was not obligatory for the female Vaiṣṇava. The *Kaupīna* was the symbol of male continence.
10. Absolute dedication of self to Kṛṣṇa.

After the performance of these sacraments the mendicant Vaiṣṇava had to practise the ritual worship of Kṛṣṇa, living in seclusion, and continence. He was forbidden to use any ritual object touched by a non-Vaiṣṇava. He was to fast on *Janmāṣṭamī* and *Ekādaśī* days.[1] The *Bhekadhārī* mendicant was to practise austerity and penance. The rituals of *Aśauca* or Impurity might be ignored by him. The *Śrāddha* ceremony of this type of Vaiṣṇava consisted of *Kīrtana*-singing and a Vaiṣṇava feast. The observance of the rules of *Sadācāra* or good conduct was obligatory after *Veṣa*.[2] Even if a *Bhekadhārī* mendicant was a Brāhmaṇa, he was not required to wear the sacred thread. But his scalp had to be adorned with an unknotted tuft of hair, called *Śikhā* (which may be translated as 'Flame').[3] It has unfortunately attracted the banter of orthodox elements and non-believers. A Vaiṣṇava mendicant had to eschew the cultivation of the scriptures of Knowledge and Action, and had to dedicate himself wholly to the cultivation of *bhakti*.[4]

The dead body of a mendicant was usually buried.[5] The *Śyāmānandi* Vaiṣṇavas of Midnapur wear the Brāhmaṇa's sacred thread after initiation, regardless of caste.[6] Vaiṣṇava initiation is said to bestow on all castes the high status of the twice-born. Some Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana regarded the bestowal of the sacred thread

1. *Veṣāsrayavidhih*, pp. 25-56.
2. Ibid., pp. 28-30.
3. Ibid., pp. 30-32.
4. Ibid., pp. 30-32.
5. Ibid., p. 33.
6. Madhusūdan Tattvavācaspati, *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Itihās*, p. 253.

on the initiated Vaiṣṇava as a part of the ritual of initiation.[1] Some Vaiṣṇavas discerned no distinction between the Brāhmaṇical sacred thread and the Vaiṣṇava garland of *Tulasī* beads.[2] These facts lead to the conclusion that ever since the time of Caitanya, Vaiṣṇava society in Bengal had been moving towards what may be described as Vaiṣṇava-Brāhmaṇa equation.

VII

Some of the Vaiṣṇava ceremonies in Bengal are personal and some are social. Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal has created far more social festivals than any other faith. The festivals of *Rathayātrā*, *Janmāṣtamī*, *Jhulana*, *Rāsayātrā* and *Dola* are held throughout Bengal. These festivals and the fairs organised during many of these festivals were highly conducive to the dissemination of Vaiṣṇavism among the peasantry. These festivals were a source of income to the Vaiṣṇava *gurus*, *gosvāmins* and *mahāntas*. They also dispelled mediaeval insularity, and lent remarkable mobility to village life.

Vaiṣṇava ceremonies and festivals were organised in particular localities by active gosvāmins and their followers. Most of these festivals owed their inception to the descendants of the Vaiṣṇava *guru-gosvāmins* of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Most of these desendants, however, lived in the districts of West Bengal. In Nadiā, Murshidābād, Rājshāhī, Midnāpur and Hooghly certain places became centres of Vaiṣṇava festivity, radiated Vaiṣṇava influence, and also kept the Vaiṣṇava tradition alive in Bengal. It is indeed significant that Navadvīpa still provided Vaisnava leadership, though the neighbouring area of Kṛṣṇagagar patronised the Śāktas, and though a rival Vaiṣṇava centre was built up in adjacent Māyāpur.

A study of the location of the Vaiṣṇava festivals makes it plain that Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal is strongly entrenched in the villages.

1. Ibid., pp. 253-54.
2. Ibid., pp. 254-55. The opinion of Viśvaṃbharānanda Deva Gosvāmin of Gopīvallabhpur is quoted to the effect that it is not obligatory for a Vaiṣṇava of the Śyāmānanda school to wear a sacred thread.

The developed and developing urban centres, except Calcutta and Dacca, have no strong Vaiṣṇava base. It must also be noted that in some places like Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapur and Hooghly, Vaiṣṇavism has become well-adjusted to Śiva, Dharma, and the Satyanārāyṇa cults. Vaiṣṇava *Saṃkīrtana* is held in certain Śiva temples of Midnāpur during the *Śivarātrī* festival. *Rathayātrā* is organised by the votaries of Satyanārāyaṇa. The *Gājan* festival, which is connected with the Dharma and Śiva cults, is held for the Vaiṣṇava God Śyāmarāya in Bandīpur village of Hooghly, and many other villages in Burdwan, Birbhum and Bankura. Non-vegetarian food is offered to the Vaiṣṇava idols of villages Mulk and Mainādāl in Birbhum. Vaiṣṇava *Saṃkīrtana*, and such Vaiṣṇava festivals as the *Rathayātrā*, *Janmāṣṭamī* and *Rāsayātrā* have, in the course of the centuries, become an inalienable ingredient of social life in Bengal's villages. Vaiṣṇava fairs like the Kendulī fair of Birbhum, the *Ratha* fairs of Māhesh and Dhāmrāi (Dacca), the *Janmāṣṭamī* procession of Dacca, and the *Rāsa* of Śāntipur are famous throughout Bengal. The commemorative *Daṇḍamahotsava* in Pāṇihāti near Calcutta is also a popular festival.[1]

1. See detailed accounts of hundreds of Vaiṣṇava festivals and fairs in *Paścim Vanger Pūjā Pārvan O Melā* (ed. Ashoke Mitra), 4 Vols. Most of these fairs and festivals have a popular character, and have no link with 'Orthodox' Vaiṣṇava organisations.

CHAPTER XIX

THE VAIṢṆAVA *GURUS*, CASTE, AND THE DEVIANT ORDERS

I

The unwavering practice of *bhakti* was designed to make the Vaiṣṇava's relation with the deity very intimate. The Vaiṣṇava devotee did not normally require the assistance of priests. Vaiṣṇavism, signifying Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship and the adoration of Caitanya, developed in Bengal as a folk-cult without priestly or Brāhmaṇical intermediacy.

But the importance of the Vaiṣṇava *guru* was never minimised by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theologians. Teacher-*gurus* taught the Vaiṣṇava scriptures. Initiating *gurus* initiated the disciples. Either of them could bestow on the disciple *Veṣa or bheka* if he himself was a mendicant *guru*.

The upper caste Vaisnavas *gurus* had the following titles :

> Adhikārī, Ācārya, Ācārī, Bhāratī, Daṇḍī, Dāsa, Devādhikārī, Devagosvāmin, Mahānta, Purī, Pūjārī, Pāṇḍā, Sādhu, Thākura, Upādhyāya, Vrajavāsī.[1]

Bengal was divided into circles for the purpose of maintaining ecclesiastical discipline. Each circle was placed under a gosvāmin. One gosvāmin's ecclesiastical jurisdiction was immune from the interference or impingement by another gosvāmin. Each gosvāmin had a superintendent who was called *Adhikārī*. The *Adhikārī* was empowered to initiate disciples and collect fees. He was assisted by a *Fauzdār* who acted as an agent of the gosvāmin. The *Fauzdār's* assistant was the *Chaḍidār* or the Whip. "Persons who joined the Vaiṣṇava communion pay a fee of twenty annas (One Rupee Twenty-five Paise), sixteen of which go to the Gosāin, and four to the Fauzdār".[2] According to MV, Vīrabhadra had a *Fauzdār* and also a *Chaḍidār*, but no *Adhikārī*.[3] Bhūpendranāth Datta thinks that

1. Madhusūdan Tattvāvacaspati, *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Itihās*, p. 293.
2. L.S.S.O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 24 *Parganas*, pp. 96-71.
3. MV, pp. 159, 245, 265.

the *Adhikārī* was an imposter. He wore the sacred thread and described himself as a 'Sāsvata Brāhmaṇa'.[1] Some *Adhikārīs* grew fabulously rich. Dewān Kīrtīcandra of Murshidabad gave his Vaiṣṇava *guru*, Khosālcandra Adhikārī, his palace and his lands, and spent his days with his wife under the shade of a tree. Some Englishmen felt pity for him, gave him a good job, and made it possible for him to build another palace.[2]

II

A good deal of complexity developed with regard to the *guru's* caste status. He might be a Brāhmaṇa or he might belong to the Śūdra castes. A Śūdra *guru* might either be 'touchable' or 'untouchable'! The *Haribhaktivilāsa* recognised the special rights of a Brāhmaṇa *guru*. His disciples might belong to the lower castes. A Śūdra *guru* could not initiate a Brāhmaṇa.[3]

But it must be said that the caste restrictions of a Śūdra *guru*, as defined in *Haribhaktivilāsa*, were not always strictly followed in Bengal. Narahari Sarkār of Śrikhaṇḍa, his nephew Raghunandana, Narottama Datta of Kheturi, Śyāmānanda of Gopīvallabhpur, and Rasikānanda of Rayanī, who were non Brāhmaṇas, had numerous Brāhmaṇa disciples. Caitanya was not perhaps opposed to such violation of caste rules by the Vaiṣṇava *gurus*. Narahari Sarkār was one of his close companions. Were Caitanya opposed to inter-caste initiation Narahari Sarkār would not have dared initiate Brāhmaṇas. Nityānanda, too, "lived with the Śūdras".[4]

Caste rules began to be strictly applied after the Kheturi festival. Narottama's claim to Brāhmaṇical status became a subject of discussion in the festival. Virabhadra himself had to come forward to support the ascription of Brāhmaṇahood to Narottama.[5] Śyāmānanda, a *Sadgopa*, did not care to have a consensus in his favour. He initiated hundreds of men and women, including tribal people,

1. *Vaiṣṇav Sāhitye Samājtattva*, p. 130.
2. Biography of Dewān Kirtichandra in *Jivanīkoṣa*, Vol. 2, pp. 115-116.
3. *Haribhaktivilāsa*, p. 21, verse 37; p. 22, verse 38 : "*Kṣatra Vit Śūdra Jātiyah Prātilomyaṃ Na Dikṣayet*".
4. CBH : p. 393 : "*Śudrera Āśrame Se Thākena Sarvakṣaṇe*".
5. *Premavilāsa*, Ch. 19, pp. 337-340.

without considering their caste. The examples set by Narahari Sarkār, Narottama and Śyāmānanda, however, definitely enfeebled the position of the Brāhmaṇas.

The Caitanya movement had been initiated by the Brāhmaṇas. They naturally wanted to maintain their predominance. They were not prepared to bestow the Brāhmaṇa status on each and every Śūdra *guru*. The clever Brāhmaṇas successfully fastened on the anti-caste Vaiṣṇava movement a Brāhmaṇical orientation. The social aim of the Vaiṣṇava movement was deflected from the removal of caste distinctions towards the establishment of social and ritual parity between the Vaiṣṇava and the Brāhmaṇa. Vaiṣṇavism was projected as a form of neo-Brāhmaṇism, the aim of which was to revitalise the moribund Hindu society by lending substance to a neo-Brāhmaṇical order, nurtured in *bhakti* ecstasy and, therefore, purer than the orthodox *Smārta* order. The Vaiṣṇavas were described as the new Brāhmaṇas.[1]

In all probability Vaiṣṇavism as a neo-Brāhmaṇa order was first projected by the followers of Śyāmānanda. The Midnapur Vaiṣṇavas began to wear the sacred thread after their initiation, regardless of caste. Vaiṣṇava neo-Brāhmaṇism grew popular also in Vṛndāvana where, in certain Vaiṣṇava circles, the bestowal of the Brahmaṇical sacred thread on the initiated Vaiṣṇava was recognised as an essential part of the ritual of initiation. Later the Vaiṣṇavas saw no difference between the sacred thread and the Vaiṣṇava garland of *Tulasī* beads and the sectarian *Tilaka* marks.[2]

But the Brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇavas were not prepared to accept the Vaiṣṇava-Brāhmaṇa equation as an accomplished fact. They introduced the worship of the *Śālagrāmaśīlā* or the *Śālagrāma* stone, and forbade the Śūdras and women to worship it.[3] They also began to

1. See, Śrīkānta Nandī's *Brāhmaṇa Vandanā*, MS. No. 92 in Viśvabhāratī collection. It was composed in B.S. 1211 (1804). Pancānan Maṇḍal, *Puthiparicaya*, Vol. I, p. 210. W.H. McLeod notes that despite the strong egalitarianism of the Sikh *gurus*, there is "continued evidence of caste distinction within the Sikh community". W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community : Five Essays*, Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 84, 87.
2. Madhusūdan Tattvavācaspati, op. cit., pp. 253-254.
3. *Kriyākāṇḍāvāridhi*, Vol. 3, pp. 527-528 ; Bhūpeṇdranāth Datta, *Vaiṣṇava Sāhitye Samājtattva*.

apply the *Smṛti*-taboo on the Brāhmaṇa's acceptance of gifts from the Śūdras.[1] In fact the Brāhmaṇa-Vaiṣṇavas, and the conservative and ascetic Vaiṣṇavas were greatly helped by Rūpa Gosvāmin's veto on excessive proselytisation.[2] The orthodox Brāhmaṇa *gurus* adroitly used the veto against those Brāhmaṇa *gurus* who were trying to have disciples of all castes. Gradually a distinction was made between "domestic" Brāhmaṇa *guru* or *Kulaguru*, who had a limited number of upper caste families under his ecclesiastical command, and the 'Vaiṣṇava' Brāhmaṇa *guru* with innumerable disciples of all castes. The social position of the latter was definitely lower than that of the former.

Even the Vaiṣṇava Brāhmaṇa *gurus* grew conscious of the distinction between the *Kulīna* Brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇavas, and the so-called *Śrotriya* Brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇavas.[3] It is significant that the apocryphal twenty-fourth chapter of *Premavilāsa* is devoted to a fairly long discussion of the *Kulīna* history and categories.[4] It is stated that the celebrated Devīvara Ghataka, the inventor of thirty-six *Kulīna* categories or *Melas*, was a disciple of Vīrabhadra.[5] In fact the descendants of Nityānanda and Advaita still favour the establishment of matrimonial relations with *Kulīna* families, irrespective of sectarian affiliation.[6] The rules of *Kulinism* permit the *Kulīna* Vaiṣṇavas to marry both Śaiva and Śākta girls. Such *Kulīna*

1. *Kriyākāṇḍavāridhi*, Vol. 3, pp. 654, 655, 681, 696, 697. It was stated in pp. 696-697 that a Brāhmaṇa might accept gifts from a Śūdra only if he was in an awkward situation.
2. *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* : translated into Bengali by Rāmnārāyaṇ Vidyāratna, ed. Brajanāth Miśra, 5th ed. Murshidabad. Rādhāramaṇ Press, 1933. p. 86, *Pūrva Lahari* 2, 51 : *Na Śiṣyānanuvadhnīṭa Granthānnaivābhyaseḍvalūn.*
3. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 24 *Parganas*, pp. 69-70. The 'Gosains' marry the daughters of *Śrotriya* or *Vaṃśaja* Brāhmaṇas, and give their daughters to *Kulīnas*.
4. *Premavilāsa*, Tālukdār ed. pp. 254-297.
5. Ibid., p. 257 : "*Virabhadra Haite Devī Kṛṣṇadīkṣā Lana*".||
6. *Pāṅckaḍi Bandyopādhyāyer Racanāvalī*, ed. Bandyopādhyāya and Dās, Vol. 1, pp. 27-28. According to one estimate the *Kulīna melas* evolved possibly in A.D.1480. Kṛṣṇacaitanya Thākur, *Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja O Śrī Caitanyacaritāmṛta*, Part I, p. 21.

marriages strengthened the Brāhmaṇa's position in the Vaiṣṇava order. There were numerous Brāhmaṇa and other upper-caste Vaiṣṇavas who did not give up either their caste status or their respective caste rituals. They merely worshipped Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa in preference to other gods.

III

The assertion of Brāhmaṇical dominance in a religious movement which was rooted in mysticism, and which was anti-caste and anti-intellectual, inevitably led to the growth of deviant orders. If a Brāhmaṇa *guru* tried to initiate persons belonging to castes which were lower than the Śūdra caste, the motive behind such initiation was questioned, and the orthodox elements gave him the bad name of a Sahajiyā, and expelled him from the Gauḍīya Vaiṇṣava order. Some examples of the growth of deviant orders as a reaction to the consolidation of Brāhmaṇical orthodoxy within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sect are given below.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century Vāsudeva and 'Cūḍādhārī' Mādhava, both Brāhmaṇa *gurus* with numerous Śūdra and untouchable disciples, were given the Sahajiyā stigma, and expelled from the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order.[1] At about the same time Jayagopāla Dāsa, a *Kāyastha* disciple of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, and author of several theological works, claimed the right to initiate Brāhmaṇas, and was consequently expelled from the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order in accordance with Vīrabhadra's wish.[2] Towards the end of the eighteenth century some Brāhmaṇas of Vikrampur Parganā in Dacca built up deviant Vaiṣṇava orders which were supported by the Śūdras, and the untouchables. One of them was Kālācānd Vidyālaṃkāra of village Fursāil. The Vidyālaṃkāra was a leader of the *Kiśorībhajana* sect which had considerable following among the untouchable Namaśūdra and Bhuimālī peasants and the Tili mer-

1. *Premavilāsa*, Tālukdār ed. Ch. 24, pp. 246-249. They were expelled by an assembly of 30 Vaiṣṇava leaders.
2. BRK. Ch. 14, p. 638, verses 180-181; Sukumar Sen, *Bāṅgāla Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. 1, Part II, pp. 63-65.

chants.[1] The idea of *Kiśorībhajana* or "Adoration of the Adolescent Girl" might have been a derivative of the Tāntrika *Kumārī Pūjā* (Worship of the Maiden). In Vikrampur and eastern Faridpur the *Kiśorībhajana* sect became so popular that at least another Brāhmaṇa (*Vaidika*) propagated it among the low castes, though he was a renowned *Śmārta* scholar, and one of the top-ranking functionaries of Dacca Sārasvat Samāj.

The *Kiśorībhajana* sect very probably originated in Sylhet in the second half of the eighteenth century. It was founded by a Brāhmaṇa named Raghunātha Bhattācārya, and his *Kāyastha* friend Śyamakiśora Ghoṣa of village Itā. The biographies of these men and an account of their faith are given in a work titled *Raghunātha-lilāmṛta*. Raghunātha's "spiritual wife" was a young non-Brāhmaṇa widow. Śyāmakiśora died in B.S. 1260 (1853).[2] Haricandra Thākura (1811-1877), a Brāhmaṇa-Vaiṣṇava *guru* of village Orākāṇḍī (Faridpur), flagrantly violated caste-rules, and established a para-Vaiṣṇava sect with Tāntrika rituals. He married a girl of the untouchable Namaśūdra caste. The persecution of the orthodox elements compelled him to migrate to Thākuranagara village near Bongāon in 24 Parganas. There he was able to spread his faith among the untouchable castes. Every year a big fair and festival is held in March in observance of Haricandra's advent.[3] One of his descendants even became a member of the Legislative Assembly of West Bengal.

The same process of deviation from orthodoxy was manifest even in Caitanya's times. Sanātana Gosvāmin once converted an Oriah Buddhist named Acyutānanda. When Acyutānanda saw that the caste rules were being strictly enforced, he became a Buddhist again in accordance with the advice of a Buddhist *guru* named

1. Kālācānd Vidyālaṃkāra's biography in *Jīvanī Koṣa*, Vol. 2, p. 52.
2. Acyutacaraṇa Tattvanidhi, *Śrīhatter Itivṛtta*, Vol. 3, p. 318, Vol. 4, pp. 165-169; Sukumār Sen, op. cit. pp. 555-56.
3. The Haricānd sect was not noted by Akṣayakumār Datta. Vide, Satyānanda Guha, "Thākurnagarer Bāruṇī Melā", *Satyayug* (Calcutta Daily), March 23, 1977, p. 6. See *Harilīlākhaṇḍa* by Tārakcandra Sarkār. For details of the Haricānd sect, see, *Paścim Vanger Pūjā Pārvaṇ O Melā*, Vol 3, (1971) pp. 17-19.

Mahānanda. Later he propagated the view that Caitanya was the incarnation of the Buddha.[1]

There were both theological and economic reasons behind the establishment of deviant orders. The economic reasons should not be overlooked. The Brāhmaṇa and upper Śūdra *gurus* hoped to derive a large income from their large following, despite the ban on excessive proselytisation. Among the Hindus of Bengal the Brāhmaṇas constituted the minority in every district. This fact is clearly revealed in the decennial *Census Reports* published since 1872. The majority of the Hindus in every district of Bengal belonged to low castes. It was, therefore, difficult for the orthodox elements to prevent some of the Brāhmaṇa and upper Śūdra *gurus* from straying into the society of the untouchables. In 1914 Pānckaḍi Bandyopādhyāya, a keen student of Bengali society and culture, noted with awe in his heart that the Sahajiyā sects were gaining ascendancy over the low castes.[2] Caitanya had, no doubt, advised the Vaiṣṇavas to spread the faith among the untouchables. None challenged the fundamental right of the untouchables to worship Kṛṣṇa. They were permitted to attend Vaiṣṇava fairs and festivals. But a Brāhmaṇa or upper Śūdra *guru* could not, in ordinary circumstances, have any untouchable disciple. Siddha Caitanyadāsa of Navadvīpa once initiated a cobbler. He was ostracised by the conservative Vaiṣṇavas of Navadvīpa for this violation of the caste rule. But Caitanya himself is said to have informed the conservative Vaiṣṇavas in an all-embracing dream that Siddha Caitanyadāsa could very well initiate an untouchable because he was *Siddha* or perfect.[3] The significance of the legend was that only the Vaiṣṇava ascetic, who had renounced the world, and who had no hankering

1. *Jīvanīkoṣa*, Vol. 1, p. 17. Acyutānanda wrote: "*Bolanti Prabhu Bhagavān| Buddharūpa Mo Śrīcaitanya|| Tānka Caraṇa Sevā Kara.| Pancatattva Pathanku Abora*".|| Quoted by Kṛṣṇacaitanya Thākur, in *Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja O Śrīcaitanyacaritāmṛta*, Part I, p. 85.
2. *Pānckaḍi Bandyopādhyāyer Granthāvalī*, Vol. 2, 'Jāi Re!' p. 217. The influence of the Sahajiyās was also noted by Kedarnāth Datta. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī* 1892-93. Vol. 4, p, 192.
3. *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*, Vol. 2, p. 93fn.

after economic gains could, with impunity, violate caste restrictions on proselytisation. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century Prabhu Jagatvandhu, a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ascetic, worked among the untouchables of Calcutta and Faridpur, his home district. Since he had renounced the world no eyebrows were raised for his total violation of caste rules.

It should be mentioned in passing that a Tāntrika *guru* of the Brāhmaṇa caste could have untouchable disciples. All castes, even the lowest Chaṇḍālas, may, if otherwise fit, receive the Tāntrika initiation and be a member of the *Cakra*.[1] The Tāntrika's fraternisation with the untouchables led to the development of popular Tāntrika bases in Mehār near Chāndpur, Poḍā Mā Talā in Navadvīpa, Kṣīragrām in Burdwan, Vakreśvara in Birbhum, and many other places.

IV

Vaiṣṇavism as a soteriological system had always a mass base. Many men began to use it as family business. *Guruship* became hereditary in the middle of the sixteenth century. Quarrels often broke out among the sons and wives of the *guru* on the question of both temporal and ecclesiastical inheritance. Advaita's sons quarrelled after his death. Since *guruship* had become hereditary, unknown Vaiṣṇavas took upon themselves the responsibility of spreading the faith among the low castes with whom the orthodox, hereditary *guru*-abbacies, with a fixed number of families under their control, had no religious connection. These unknown Vaiṣṇavas were mostly leaders of the deviant Vaiṣṇava orders. The brilliant work of Ramaśaraṇ Pāl, the *Kartābhajā* pope, and his son Dulālcānd, would be discussed in the next chapter. Here some of the important achievements of these deviant *gurus* are noted.

The spread of Vaiṣṇavism among the tribals was undoubtedly an event of great significance. "The Vaishnava Gosains", wrote Jadunāth Sarkār, "set themselves to converting aboriginal tribes

1. Sir John Woodroffe, *Shakti and Shakta* (1951 ed.) p. 504.

and thus brought new light into their lives after ages of neglect, contumely and superstition".[1]

The tribal Hājongs of Susang-Durgāpur in Mymensingh district were converted into Vaiṣṇavism by two legendary *gurus* named Mādhava Dāsa and Rāma Dāsa.[2] According to the *Census Report* of 1901 the total number of Vaiṣṇavas in Sylhet was 5,60,379. Most of them belonged to the *Kiśoribhajana* sect.[3] The strength of Vaiṣṇavism in Sylhet was attributed to the great popularity of the deviant Vaiṣṇava orders. One of the most powerful of these deviant sects was the Jaganmohaṇī sect of Sylhet, which was founded by Jaganmohana Gosvāmin (1528-1560).[4] Jaganmohana lived in Bāghāsurā village and was the disciple of Gopīnātha. The Jaganmohaṇī sect propagated the view that the *guru* was of supreme importance. It saw no difference between the *guru* and Absolute Truth. Rāmakṛṣṇa Gosvāmin, a leader of the sect, was a Kaivarta by caste. He founded, in the seventeenth century, a monastery or *Ākhḍā* at Vithangal, the yearly income of which was once Rs. 40,000/-. The Vithangal Vaiṣṇavas regarded Caitanya as the supreme *guru*. But the orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas had no connection with them. Situated on the border between Sylhet and Mymensingh, Vithangal radiated Vaiṣṇava influence towards Tripurā, Comillāh, Mymensingh and eastern Dacca.[5] The influential Vaiṣṇava-Bāul centre in Narsingdi village in Dacca claimed affiliation with the Vithangal monastery. Some Vaiṣṇava-Bāuls of Mymensingh were trained by the Vithangal Vaiṣṇavas towards the beginning of the twentieth century.[6]

1. *History of Bengal*, Vol. 2, Delhi, 1977 ed. pp. 221-222.
2. Acyutacaran Tattvanidhi, *Śrīhatter Itivṛtta*, Part II, Vol. 2, Ch. I, pp. 142-43.
3. *Report on the Census of Assam*, 1901, Ch. IV, p. 41.
4. This date is mentioned in Lavanī or Navanī Dāsa's biography of Jaganmohana, entitled *Jaganmohanabhāgavata*. Sukumar Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 388; also, Tattvanidhi, op. cit. Part IV, pp. 73-81; *Assam District Gazetteers*, Vol. 2, Ch. 3, p. 84.
5. Tattvanidhi, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 138; Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. 2. p. 282.
6. *Dīna Śarat Bāuler Gān*, Intro. p. 16. The songs of Śarat Bāul show *Sūfi* influence.

According to Hunter, Rāmakṛṣṇa "is said to have received initiation from a Mussalman inspiration".[1] According to Kṣitimohan Sen, Rāmakṛṣṇa visited the tomb of Sheikh Main-ud-din Chisti in Ajmer in 1625 or thereabouts.[2] Sylhet was also a centre of the Viṣṇusvāmī Vaiṣṇavas.[3] The Sahajiyā influence was particularly strong in Sylhet even in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its leading *guru* at that time was a *Kāyastha* named Durgāprasād Kar, who died in 1904.[4]

Some Vaiṣṇava-Bāuls, who cultivated *Nāgerividyā* or neo-Platonism, spread Vaiṣṇavism among the low castes of northern Mymensingh, Barisāl, and Rongpur districts. In Rongpur and adjacent districts of North Bengal, three schools of Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇavas were very active. These were the *Kamalakumārī* Sahajiyās, *Mājhā-bāḍī* Sahajiyās, and the *Madhyama* Sahajiyās. The first type of Sahajiyās wore the Vaiṣṇava garland, and observed the simplified rituals introduced by Kṛṣṇadāsa II. The two other schools were very liberal. They did not observe the caste regulations. The last two orders were amalgamated by a *guru* named Rūpacandra Gosvāmin in the first half of the nineteenth century. Rūpacandra's leading disciple was one Kṣepā Gosāin of Nilfāmārī, who died in 1920 at the age of seventy-five.[5]

In the district of Pabna and Bogra, Vaiṣṇavism was championed by the celebrated Lālān Fakir (born, 1766/1775; died, 1892), a Muhammadan Bāul with a strong bias for Vaiṣṇavism.[6] Another notable Vaiṣṇava leader of Pabna was Śambhūcandra, who founded a deviant order in 1830 or thereabouts. He was probably influenced by the Jaganmohaṇī order of Sylhet. He, too, preached the divinity

1. Hunter, op. cit., p. 282.
2. Kṣitimohan Sen, "Madhyayuge Bānglā O Rājasthāner Madhye Sādhanār Saṃparka", *Bangaśrī*, Āśvina, B.S. 1340 (1933), p. 388.
3. Tattvanidhi, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 82-84.
4. Ibid., pp. 86-92. Durgāprasād Kar was known as a *Sādhu* or Saint.
5. Kṣitimohan Sen, op. cit., pp. 388-89.
6. S. M. Lutfar Rahaman, "Lālan Sāher Jīvan Kathā", in *Pūrva Pākistaner Prabandha Saṃgraha*, ed. Maitreyī Devī, pp. 215-290. 73 Vaiṣṇav songsa of the Fakir are collected in *Lālan Gītikā*, ed. Matilāl Dās and Pijūṣkānti Mahāpātra, pp. 207-256.

and the infallibility of the *Guru*. The Śambhūcandrī sect was extremely popular among the local *Mālo* fishermen. The Śambhūcandrīs also worshipped Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya. They built a monastery at Chitholiyā village which had a hereditary *Mahānta*. The sect had considerable following in Rongpur, Assam, Faridpur and Jessore-Khulnā.[1]

The position of the Sahajiyās grew strong in Vikrampur Pargan after the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas began to nestle close to Brāhmaṇical orthodoxy. Sudhārām Bāul of Serajābād had a sizable following among the untouchable Namaśūdras and Bhuimālis.[2] Towards the end of the eighteenth century Sahajiyā *Ākhḍās* were established in such villages of Vikrampur as Haldiyā,[3] Pāoldiyā, Royāil, Sherabād, Japsā and Kalākopā.[4]

The Śambhucandrī sect of Pābnā had a large following in Jessore where the Guru Satya order claimed direct affiliation with the Chitholiyā monastery. Rādhāramaṇa and Syāma, two leading Bāuls of Jessore, built their respective *Ākhḍās* in Śivrāmpur village of Māgurā. Rādhāramaṇa Bāul had the distinction of being the inventor of a new type of Vaiṣṇava *Kīrtana* called *Dhap Kirtana*, which was later perfected and popularised by Madhusūdan Kinnara or Madhu Kān. Lālan Fakir, too, had many followers in Jessore. Another Bāul named Īśāṇa Fakir had a powerful base among the untouchables of southern Jessore and the adjoining areas in 24 Parganas.[5]

V

Unknown Vaiṣṇavas, who certainly did not belong to the orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order, spread Vaiṣṇavism among the scheduled castes and tribes mentioned in the following table.

1. L.S.S.O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Pabna, pp. 32-33.
2. Sudhārām was born in 1756. Himāngśu Chattopādhyāya, *Vikrampur*, Vol. 2, 75-80, 380.
3. Ibid., p. 479.
4. *Vikrampur* (monthly), Śrāvaṇ-Bhādra, 1320 (1913), p. 196; Vaiśākh, 1322 (1915), pp. 29-30.
5. Satish Chandra Mitra, *Yaśohar-Khulnār Itihās*, Vol. 2, pp. 876, 879.

SCHEDULED CASTES

Name of the Caste	*Population (Census of 1961)*	*Religion*
Bāiti	8269	Mainly Vaiṣṇavism
Bhuimālī	3,91,81	Kṛṣṇa worship
Dhobā	1,54,791	Mainly Vaiṣṇavism
Doai	1,41,91	Majority Vaiṣṇavas
Dom	15,18,18	Worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa
Goṇrhi	1,38,59	Mainly Vaiṣṇavism
Jāliā Kaivarta	1,17,384	Mainly Vaiṣṇavism
Mālo	6,87,57	Mainly Vaiṣṇavism
Kāndrā	25430	Mainly Vaiṣṇavism
Pod	87,55,25	Majority Vaiṣṇavas
Rājwār	4,11,33	Vaiṣṇavism
Śuṇṛi	10,68,70	Caitanya worship
Tiyār	39633	Vaiṣṇavism

SCHEDULED TRIBES

Korā	2054081	Worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa
Māhālī	28233	Observe Dolayātrā
Orāons of Sundarban	—	Worship Hari

(Source : Amalkumār Dās, Bidyutkumār Rāychaudhurī, Manis Kumār Rāhā, *Handbook on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of West Bengal*)

A Brāhmaṇa could not be a *guru* of prostitutes and vintners or *Śuṇṛis*. Some Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins, however, became their *gurus*. Ward wrote : "At Calcutta nearly all the women of ill fame profess the religion of Choitunyu before their death, that they may be intitled to some sort of funeral rites".[1] J.N. Bhattācārya wrote in 1896 : "Buddha himself accepted the hospitality and the gifts of a courtesan just as some of the Chaitanite Gossains of Calcutta are known to do at present".[2] The results of the proselytising efforts of the Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins are summed up below :

Most Suvarṇavaṇiks (goldsmiths) were converted into Vaiṣṇavism. The orthodox elements spread the canard that the Vaiṣṇava *gurus* of the Suvarṇavaṇiks were immoralists. But according to J.N. Bhattāchārya the canard had no foundation in reality.[3]

1. W. Ward : *Account of the Writings, Religion and Manners of the Hindoos* (1811), Vol. 2, p. 262.
2. J.N. Bhattācārya, *Hindu Castes and Sects*. p. 280.
3. Ibid., p. 160.

The Tāntis (weavers) of Katwa and Dacca had Vaiṣṇava *gurus*.[1]

The rich goldsmith-Kāmārs of Dacca were Kṛṣṇa-worshippers, although, in general, the Kāmārs were *Śāktas*.[2]

Most of the Śuṇṛis (vintners) were Vaiṣṇavas. There were many Śuṇṛi Vaiṣṇava *gurus*.[3]

The Kolus (oilmen) were thoroughly Vaiṣṇava.[4]

The Sadgopa herdsmen and milktraders were converted by Śyāmānanda and Rasikānanda. In 24-Parganas they were converted by the powerful Kartābhajās.

A substantial section of the Luniyā salt-manufacturers embraced Vaiṣṇavism.[5] Even the untouchable Chāmārs (Cobblers), Doms (Corpse burners), Bāuris and Bāgdis were admitted within the Vaiṣṇava fold.[6]

These pariahs of the Hindu society of Bengal were converted by Vaiṣṇava *Bābājis*, most of whom belonged to the 'touchable' Śūdra castes. Many of them were Kāyasthas. Most of them had no link with the orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order. Some of the *Bābāji* missionaries were "ex-convicts and criminals who have eluded the pursuit of police, and persons who have been excommunicated by their caste-men for unholy love-making".[7] Most of the Vaiṣṇava nuns were "recruited from the superannuated unfortunates of the towns". "The order is joined also by some unchaste widows of the lower classes".[8] It is very difficult for us to assertain the the truth in such moralistic evaluations.

VI

When the orthodox Brāhmaṇas and other Brāhmaṇa or upper Śūdra *gurus* felt that the conversion of the untouchables could not

1. Ibid., pp. 185-86.
2. Ibid., p. 195.
3. Ibid., p. 203.
4. Ibid., pp. 200-11.
5. Ibid., p. 212.
6. Ibid., p. 367.
7. J N. Bhattāchārya, op. cit., p. 369.
8. Ibid , p. 369.

be stopped, they contrived the following Vaiṣṇava hierarchy :[1]

1. The initiating Brāhmaṇa *guru* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order.
2. Other high caste Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ascetics and mendicants.
3. The high caste Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava householders.
4. The so-called 'Jāt Vaiṣṇava', or "Vaiṣṇava by caste", who really belonged to the low or untouchable castes. The *Jāt Vaiṣṇava* was not a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava in the proper sense of the term.

This was a pyramidal structure with the Brāhmaṇa *gurus* placed at the top. The Brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇavas could retain their high caste privileges because they alone had the right to embrace Vaiṣṇavism after performing "the five Brāhmaṇical duties".[2] That the Brāhmaṇa-Vaiṣṇavas were the *best* Vaiṣṇavas was a dubious hypothesis which was circulated with the authority of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya behind it.[3] Next, the orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas debunked the Bāuls, the Caraṇpākhīs, and the Kartābhajās, and described them as Muhammadan sects with a Hindu grab.[4] A low-caste Vaiṣṇava *Bābāji*, who lived the life of a householder, was regarded as a sort of spiritual bastard.[5] The so-called Jāt Vaiṣṇavas, whom Bipincandra Pāl discribed as "out-caste Vaiṣṇavas",[6] were regarded as Vaiṣṇava pariahs by the Vaiṣṇavas of the upper castes on the following grounds :[7]

1. They were untouchable to the Brāhmaṇas.
2. They did not observe the Brāhmaṇical sacraments.
3. Their marriage consisted in an exchange of garlands between the bridegroom and the bride (In other words, the ceremony was too simple to make the marriage look legal).
4. To them extra-marital coitus was quite normal and licit.

1. The hierarchical pattern is given in *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, 1892-93, Vol. 4, p. 3.
2. Ibid., p, 5.
3. Ibid., p. 155.
4. Ibid. 1885, Vol. 2, p. 118.
5. Ibid., 1885, Vol. 2, p. 131 : the term used is *Āśramasankarya*.
6. Pal, *Bengal Vaishnavism*, pp. 129-130.
7. *Sajjanatoṣaṇi*, 1885, Vol. 2, pp. 140-41.

5. Their ranks were swelled by bastards born of illicit wedlock.
6. Most of them were mendicants.

Thus, the main result of the Vaiṣṇava-Brāhmaṇa equation was that the majority of the Vaiṣṇavas were regarded as untouchable, lewd, bastards. The upper caste Vaiṣṇavas invented the fiction that Vaiṣṇavism in the real sense of the term had been repudiated by the low-caste, untouchable Vaiṣṇavas. The Vaiṣṇava rituals, as practised by the upper castes were, according to the orthodox elements, at least equal to, if not superior to, the *Smārta* Brāhmaṇical rituals and sacraments. The Kṣatriya, Vaidya and the Kāyastha Vaiṣṇavas claimed the right to worship the *Śāligrāma* stone, and utter the Vedic *Praṇava* syllables. The utterly reactionary Brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇavas claimed for themselves the lion's share of the privileges.[1]

Risley was severely taken to task for minimising the distinction between the upper caste Vaiṣṇavas and the 'out-caste' Vaiṣṇavas, and also for assigning a very low position to the Vaiṣṇavas in general in the *Census Report* of 1901. It is interesting to note that the upper caste Vaiṣṇavas were supported by some influential *Smārta* Brāhmaṇas of Navadvīpa, who, in a petition, requested the Government of Bengal to place them in the middle position between the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas.[2]

In 1910 or thereabouts one Dr. Priyanāth Nandī, a Suvarṇavaṇik Vaiṣṇava, founded a society called Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanyatattvapracārinī Sabhā with a view to segregating the deviant Vaiṣṇavas, along with the worshippers of Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmī.[3] But all high caste Vaiṣṇavas did not support this extreme view. Kedārnāth Datta, *Bhaktivinoda*, for instance, counselled moderation. He suggested the following methods for the improvement of the caste status of the Vaiṣṇava untouchables :[4]

1. Madhusūdan Tattvavācaspati, *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Itihās*, pp. 191, ff.
2. Ibid., p. 360.
3. *Śrī Śrī Vaiṣṇavasanginī*, B.S. 1317 (1910), Vol. 5, No. 10, pp. 43-45.
4. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, 1885, Vol. 2, pp. 142-43.

1. The *Jāt* Vaiṣṇavas should give up their predilection for the Tāntrika rituals, and exclusively worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.
2. They should observe the rules of *Sanātana Dharma* and *Varṇāśrama* as propounded in the *Dharmaśāstra*.
3. They should practise monogamy.
4. They should give up mendicancy, and cultivate the cottage industries and crafts.

VII

Brāhmaṇical rancour against the "out-caste" Vaiṣṇavas was not wholly a result of orthodoxy. The Brāhmaṇas were hindered by their own ineradicable caste prejudice from tapping the new sources of income. Weber says: "The increasing number of small burghers and the proletarian masses, and the increase of wealth among the burgher strata in the cities raised the chances of fees for the *guru* demagogues who were oriented towards them".[1] Even Rammohun Ray noted the increase of wealth among the burgher strata in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.[2] During the Mughal rule money relations had been introduced into a system of 'natural economy'. In agriculture there was a perceptible shift to high-grade crops and cash crops. The system of taxation was regressive; the poor were taxed more heavily than the rich.[3] The Brāhmaṇa *gurus* developed an exclusive interest in the unearned income of the rich. The upper caste Vaiṣṇavas closely guarded their disciples of the richer strata against the onslaught of the dubious *Bābājis*. This need compelled the Brāhmaṇa and the upper Śūdra *gurus* to describe the low-caste Vaiṣṇavas and their *Bābājis* as untouchables.

The Brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇava *gurus* of Yājīgrāmā and Gāmbhilā-Bālucara were quite rich. Quite rich were the Brāhmaṇa *gurus* of

1. Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, p. 323.
2. Prabhātkumār Mukhopādhyāya, *Rāmmohon Rāi O Tatkālin Samāj O Sāhitya*, pp. 258-59.
3. Irfan Habib: "Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India", *Enquiry*, New Series, Vol. III. 1971, pp. 12-14.

Khaḍadaha.[1] The Vaidya *gurus* of Śrīkhaṇḍa were affluent. Of the Brāhmaṇa *gurus* of the sixteenth century, the richest was Nityānanda Avadhūta, mainly because he had converted the Vaṇik burnghers of Saptagrāma. His son Vīrabhadra lived like a prince. Narottama Datta, son of a wealthy landlord, lived the life of a mendicant. Śyāmānanda and Rasikānanda, *gurus* of both the rich and the poor, had a substantial bishopric in Gopīvallabhpur. Śivānanda Sena, Kavi Karṇapūra's father, and Khanja Bhagavān Ācārya, of Mālīpāḍā, Hooghly, were rich men. Among the *Gopālas*, three men were noted for their affluence. They were Dhananjaya Paṇḍita, Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita and Kamalākara Piplāi. In Burdwan there was a Vaiṣṇava *guru* named Bhavānanda Gosvāmin who was the owner of 140 *bighās* of land.[2]

The Vallabhācārī *gurus* of Western India introduced the following religious "tariff", which their disciples had to pay, and which, when properly collected, made them fabulously rich.[3]

Nature of the Service	*Fee to be paid by the disciple*
For homage to *guru* by sight...	Rs. 5/-
For homage to *guru* by touch...	Rs. 20/-
For "swinging" him...	Rs. 40/-
For washing his feet...	Rs. 35/-
For smearing his body with unguents...	Rs. 42/-
For being allowed to sit with him...	Rs. 60/-
For being closeted with him...	Rs. 50/- to Rs 100/-
For taking betel from his mouth...	Rs. 17/-
For the privilege of dancing with him...	Rs. 100/- to Rs. 200/-
For drinking the water in which he has bathed...	Rs. 17/-

The Vaiṣṇava *gurus* of Bengal did not demand such fees. W. Ward mentions the following customary payments made by the Vaiṣṇavas :[4]

1. Voluntary offerings of the disciples to the "Idol" in the *guru's* house.

1. J.N. Bhattāchārya, op. cit., p. 280; Bhūpendranāth Datta, op. cit. p. 127.
2. Pancānan Maṇḍal, *Puthiparicaya*, Vol. 3, p. 375.
3. J.N. Bhattāchārya, op. cit., pp. 361-362.
4. Ward, *Account of the Writings, Religion and Manners of the Hindoos*, Vol. 3, pp. 261-62.

2. Marriage fee of one rupee and four *annas* to be paid both by the bridegroom and the bride.
3. Initiation fee.
4. The *guru* claimed the effects of those disciples who died intestate.

Many 'bachelor' Vaiṣṇavas were employed by the rich householders as priests of the Vaiṣṇava temples.[1] Some initiated Vaiṣṇavas were professional *Kīrtana*-singers employed by rich Vaiṣṇava landlords. Lālbihāri De noted that the native bankers and weavers were great patrons of the Vaiṣṇava *gurus*.[2] In one account we find that the influential Vaiṣṇava *guru* received gifts of tussore silk, coconuts, dried mangoes, excellent fruit preserves and palm-leaf fans.[3] A Vaiṣṇava *guru* and a *Kūlaguru* who might be a *Tāntrika* or a Viṣṇu worshipper were expected to visit the villages and towns, where his disciples lived, at least once a year. Each visit of the Vaiṣṇava *guru* or *Kūlaguru* was an interesting event. He was royally fed and given gifts. He returned to his *Śrīpāta* laden with money and gifts.[4]

The *gurus* in general and particularly the low-caste *Bābājis* could not afford to be extortionate, because extortion might have alienated them from their flock. Each disciple was expected to pay the *guru* money or gifts according to his/her ability. A poor disciple of the *guru* was not neglected by him, since most of his disciples were poor.

VIII

Kennedy described the Vaiṣṇava *gurus* as social parasites. "Many Gosvāmins live entirely on the income derived from the gifts and fees paid by their disciples...the result is largely a parasitic class, making little return in a way of moral and spiritual leadership to

1. Ward, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 435.
2. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XV, 1851, p. 194.
3. Pancānan Maṇḍal, *Cithipatre Samājacitra*, Vol. I, p. 93; Lāl Bihāri De, *Bengal Peasant Life* (ed. 1970), p. 105.
4. *Calcutta Review*, op, cit., p. 193.

justify their existence".[1] Kennedy's conclusion is a debatable one. Every faith is dependent on the financial assistance of the believers. The leaders of a faith should not be described as parasites on that account.

The missionaries of Serampore spent, between 1801 and 1832, a huge sum of money for translating the *Bible* into forty different languages. The sources from which the sum came are not definitely mentioned; evidently it came from the supporters of the Baptist Mission, since the government of the East India Company did not spend money for Christian proselytisation in India.[2] Even after spending a huge sum, and working so hard, the Baptist Missionaries could convert, by the year 1838, not more than 3000 Indians. "This", says Daniel Potts, "considering the population of India, or even Bengal where the Baptists' efforts concentrated, was an infinitesimal number".[3] It would, however, be unjust to describe the Serampore Mission as a Mission of impractical visionaries simply because it spent money donated to its fund in an unfruitful endeavour. The Serampore Mission has certainly a distinct place in the cultural history of modern Bengal.

Simply because the gosvāmins lived on the income derived from the fees paid by their disciples, they may be naturally regarded as parasites. But such a judgment would be too simplistic and superficial to merit serious attention. The total effect of their activities should be studied before a final assessment is made. The relation between a Vaiṣṇava *guru* and his disciples was not merely a monetary one. The *guru* acted as a guardian of the Vaiṣṇava caste and the Vaiṣṇava faith. In Rājshahī and Dināj̇pur, for instance, he was

1. M. Kennedy, *The Caitanya Movement*, p, 156. Bholanath Chunder made the following very interesting comments: "The Gossains promise to ferry you across the Bhubosindhoo, or the Ocean of life, upon their shoulders... Now, that loaves and fishes are scarce, the Gossains are leaving off to announce themselves at the doors of their followers, with flag-bearers, and *Khootnies*, and haut-boys, and taking to the Europeen method of announcement by cards". *Travels of a Hindoo* (1869), Vol. I, p. 5.
2. Sushil Kumar De, *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, 1962, p. 99.
3. E. Daniel Potts: *British Baptist Missionaries in India*, p. 47.

mainly responsible for the preservation of the customary rules of Vaiṣṇava conduct. No Vaiṣṇava was permitted to eat forbidden fruit, drink wine, and indulge in moral turpitude. Serious offences were punishable.[1] Bhagavān Dāsa of Kālnā exercised great control over the entire Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava organisation in Bengal during the second half of the nineteenth century. But like any serious and sincere Franciscan friar, Bhagavān Dāsa practised both poverty and charity. The eighty-eight Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava saints and *gurus*, whose life-sketches are given in Haridāsa Dāsa's *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana* (Volume 2), were poor. Some of them lived on *mādhukarī* or mendicancy. Most Bāuls and Sahajiyās lived in extreme poverty, though they had numerous disciples. Lālan Fakir, who had thousands of followers, lived the life of a proletarian. Lālbihārī De described the Vaiṣṇava *Ākhḍās* or monasteries of lower Bengal as "miserable and wretched establishments".[2] Even some of the householding *gurus* were very poor. Pancānan Maṇḍal refers to one Lokanātha Gosvāmin who had to sell his property for securing the wherewithal for his journey to Vṛndāvana.[3]

By stressing the personal relation between the deity and the devotee, Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* led to the birth of a rugged individualism which was fostered by the deviant Vaiṣṇava *gurus*. Lālan Fakir described the Brāhmaṇical rituals as a "dark cloud generated by the Vedas".[4] It certainly took some courage to denounce the Vedas at a time when the Brāhmaṇa ritualists had already succeeded in adducing "Vedic" evidence for their rituals. The *Fakir* also criticised the caste system in a beautiful song which is freely translated below:

> Everybody wants to know the caste of Lālan. But he has no idea of the exact contours of caste. Some wear the garland. Some wear the *Tasbi*. These different ornaments make the castes of those who wear them divergent. But when a man is born, and when a man dies, he does not bear

1. O' Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Rajshahi, p. 58.
2. *Calcutta Review*, XV, 1851, p. 198.
3. Pancānan Mandal, *Cithipatre Samājcitra*, Vol. I, p. 256.
4. "*Vaidika Meghe Ghora Andhakāra, Udaya Hayanā Dinamaṇi*", *Lālan Gītikā*, Song No. 413, p. 286.

any sign or symbol of caste. It is said that a Muhammadan is a Muhammadan because *Sunnat* (Circumcision) is a Muhammadan custom. A Brāhmaṇa is a Brāhmaṇa because he wears the sacred thread. But how then would one recognise a woman as a Muhammadan woman who is not subject to the rule of *Sunnat*? How then would one recognise a Brāhmaṇa woman who does not wear the sacred thread?

The whole world discusses caste. People talk of caste differences here and there. Lālan says that he has sunk the sinker of caste in the gathering of honest devotees.[1]

The right to differ from, and even oppose the accepted value-schedule is brilliantly expressed in a Sahajiyā work titled *Svarūpa-kalpataru*, the authorship of which is attributed to one Narottama Dāsa. A free translation of some of its passages is given below :[2]

The whole world regards someone as a mother. I regard that person as a father. The whole world regards something as a sin. I regard it as something holy. The whole world considers something to be good. To me it is bad. The whole world regards something as absolute truth. To me it is absolutely false. What is considered virtuous by the whole world is, in my estimation, nothing but veritable nuisance. Those whom the whole world adores are exceedingly dishonourable to me. What is generally considered reprehensible is, in my estimation, very good. The whole world lays down rules. I consider these rules bad. Those whom the world ignores on the ground of poverty are, to me, very rich.

The document is an emphatic declaration of the freedom to revolt. The right to hold deviant views was vigorously pursued by Vaiṣṇavas like Rūpa Kavirāja and Jayakṛṣṇa Dāsa who preferred oblivion to blind conformity. It was asserted by those nameless Vaiṣṇavas who converted the untouchables, the prostitutes, the pariahs and the neglected tribals. Weber writes : "In the days of Islamic foreign domination and persecution the *gurus* at times were fixed supporters of the masses of Hindus in all inner and consequently also external needs".[3] When the Brāhmaṇas and other upper caste *gurus* had isolated themselves from the Hindu masses, the low caste *gurus* lived with the Hindu masses, and gave them

1. *Lālan Gītikā*, Song No. 54, p. 38.
2. *Puthi Paricaya*, Vol. 3, pp. 392-93.
3. Weber, op. cit., pp. 319-320.

guidance. The work of these low caste *gurus* produced some far reaching effects. Vaiṣṇavism, and particularly the Sahajiyā cult, many works of which were composed in cryptic prose and easy verse, certainly became an effective medium of spreading literacy among the low castes, Of the 492 Vaiṣṇava works which were composed between the seventeenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, and which have been mentioned by Sukumar Sen,[1] the great majority were written by Vaiṣṇavas who were, in all probability, independent of the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava order. The circulation of these works would have been impossible without a literacy drive. In 1811 Ward noted that even the weavers, the barbers, the farmers, the oilmen, the petty traders, the village bankers, the spice-sellers, the wine-dealers, the ornament makers, etc., most of whom were Vaiṣṇavas, "can read the translations of Pooranus in Bengalee."[2] Vaiṣṇava nuns, called *Boṣtumīs*, were employed as teachers of the ladies in aristocratic seraglios. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Harasundarī Dāsī, daughter of Rājā Shib Chunder Rāybāhādur of Postā, Calcutta, learnt the alphabets from an adolescent *Boṣtumī*.[3] A *Boṣtumī* was also the teacher of the Tagore ladies of Jorāsānko, Calcutta.[4] The practice of employing Vaiṣṇava nuns as seraglio-teachers was later emulated by the Christinn ladies of the Female Juvenile Society led by Miss Cook.

The spread of Vaiṣṇavism among the masses was economically significant. With the help of the Malla kings of Viṣṇupur the *gurus* spread Vaiṣṇavism among the tribes of Chittagong, Maṇipur, and Maynāmatī hills.[5] The result of the tribal conversions was the reclamation of waste land and the spread of cultivation. The holding of hundreds of Vaiṣṇava fairs and festivals throughout Bengal must have resulted in an appreciable increase in the volume of

1. There works are listed in *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. I, Part II.
2. Ward, op. cit., Vol. 4, p. 71.
3. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāya, *Saṃvād Patre Sekāler Kathā*, (1933 ed.), Vol. I, pp. 219, 405.
4. Devendranāth Tagore, *Ātmajīvani*, p. 252; Sushil Kumar Ray (ed.) *Banga Prasanga*, p. 5.
5. *Bṛhat Banga*, Vol. 2, p. 756.

interregional trade.[1] Mukundarāma describes the merchants of Saptagrāma as a lazy band which was absolutely stationary.[2] Vaiṣṇavism, spread among them by Nityānanda, presumably made them dynamic. There was at least in North Bengal, the 'Gosāi' merchants who dealt in silk and cotton goods, chintzes, carpets and Patna blankets.[3] Did the *Vaṇiks* or merchants support the Caitanya movement because it gave them an opportunity to develop their trade outside Bengal ?

Thanks to the Vaiṣṇava inspiration temple-building was developed throughout Bengal as an industry in which both skilled and unskilled labour found employment. This industry created incentive for the remarkable development of village arts and crafts. Temple building also promoted "caste-mobility". Temples were built even by the untouchables like the Pods or Pauṇdrakṣatriyas. It was almost a revolutionary development in Bengal where the *Smārta* Brāhmaṇas had long ago deprived them of religious rights.[4]

IX

The spread of Vaiṣṇavism among the low castes strengthened eclectic tendencies. Eclecticism was produced by a combination of circumstances. Many Tāntrika Brāhmaṇas found Vaiṣṇavism far more lucrative than secret Śaiva-Sākta worship. They became Vaiṣṇava *gurus*. They practised secret Tāntrika worship "in circle". But they openly professed Vaiṣṇavism.[5] On the other hand, ecle-

1. Nirmal Kumār Basu, *Hindu Samājer Gaḍaṇ*, pp. 84-85 ; The Vaiṣṇava fair as a good seasonal market is described by Dīnendra Kumār Rāy in *Pallīcitra* (3rd ed. 1922), pp. 85-101 ; 105-126 ; 129-148 ; 151-166.
2. *Caṇḍīmangala* (Sāhitya Akademi ed), p. 231 : *Saptagrāmera Vaṇik Kothā Nāhi Yāya| Ghare Vaisyā Sukhamokṣa Nānā Dhana Pāya.||* But Bengal had a substantial ship-building industry in the Sultanate period. *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I, ed. Raychaudhuri and Habib, 1982, p. 130.
3. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 224.
4. Hitesh Ranjan Sanyal, "Temple Promotion and Social Mobility in Bengal", *Essays in Honour of Professor Nihar Ranjan Ray*, pp. 341-371.
5. J.N. Bhattācārya, op. cit., p 367.

cticism was the natural consequence of the Vaiṣṇavisation of the untouchables and the tribes. They were not expected to observe the sophisticated rituals of *Haribhaktivilāsa* and *Satkṛyāsāradīpikā*. They could not forget their village deities, most of which had a Tāntrika colour. The Vaiṣṇavas had to respect these folk gods and goddesses. Many villages had both Śaiva and Sākta temples. Some of these villages are Baincigrām (Hooghly), Garbhetā (Midnāpur), Candrakonā (Midnāpur), Kesiarī (Midnāpur), Baṛanagar (Murshidābād), Kālnā (Burdwan), Śāntipur (Nadiā), Saidābād (Murshidābād, Tarās (Pābna), Nānur (Bīrbhum), Puthiyā (Rājshāhī), Cāncḍā (Jessore), Kṣirpāi (Midnāpur), Dacca City, Chātnā (Bānkurā), Egrā (Midnāpur), Bānsberiā (Hooghly), etc. In West Bengal nearly forty-three or more villages were centres of rustic Tāntrika gods and goddesses.[1] The notable among them were Rājbalhāt (Burdwan), Kṣīragrām (Burdwan), Tamluk (Midnāpur), Pahārpur (Nadiā), Śiyākholā (Hooghly), and Bārāsat (24 Parganas).[2] The Vaiṣṇava converts could not suddenly grow indifferent to the non-Vaiṣṇava deities.

The eclectic tendency was manifest in the late mediaeval Bengali *Kāvya*s. Obeisance is paid to Caitanya in such non-Vaiṣṇava works as the *Caṇḍīmangala* of Mukundarāma, *Manasāmangala* of Ketakādāsa-Kṣemānanda, and *Śivāyaṇa* of Rameśvara, in the invocatory verses. The names of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya were used in the rituals of black magic. Rādhā was described as a goddess who killed the demon Śumbha.[4] In an unpublished manuscript of the *Bṛhatrudrayāmalatantra*,[5] Kṛṣṇa explains to Nārada the sexo-*yogic* rituals of the Tāntrika *Siddhācāra*. A Nātha-Yogī paid his homage both to Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya, and described Sanātana Gosvāmin as a Muhammadan ascetic of the *Murshidā* order.[6] The *Jṇānasāgara*

1. Pancānan Mandal, *Puthiparicaya*, Vol. 3, pp. 159-161.
2. Many other centres are mentioned in the four vols. of *Paścim Vanger Pūjā Pārvan O Melā*, ed. Ashok Mitra.
3. Ibid., p. 167.
4. Ibid., pp. 22-24.
5. *Bṛhatrudrayāmalatantra*, *Uttarabhāga*, with the commentary of Rāmānanda Śarmā, (who was a Rāma-worshipper). Sanskrit Sāhitya Pariṣat MS. No, 26/29 (Tantra).
6. *Puthiparicaya*, Vol. I, p. 67.

of Āli Rājā, a noted Muhammadan mystic, has a reference to the Vṛndāvana sports of Kṛṣṇa.[1]

The eclectic tendency was manifest in the late mediaeval Vaiṣṇava temples. In the Śrīdhara temple of Bānkurā the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī, and the birth of Kārttikeya were sculptured on the walls. On the Laksmī-Janārdana temple of Ilāmbāzār (Bīrbhūm), one may find tbe ten-armed Mahiṣamardinī sculpture. The same sculpture is found on the Ananta-Vāsudeva temple of Bānsberiā (Hooghly). The Kālī-temple of Baṛanagar (Murshidābad) has Kṛṣṇa's *Vālalīlā* and *Dānalīlā* figures.[2] Vaiṣṇavism strengthened communal harmony in Bengal. There was hardly any Muhammadan opposition to the building of temples and singing of *Kīrtana*. The Muslim peasantry were not debarred from attending the Vaiṣṇava fairs. There is a list of one hundred and two Muhammadan poets who composed folk-songs on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Caitanya, and Nityānanda.[3] Many Muhammadan Bāul poets of Sylhet wrote songs on purely Vaiṣṇava themes.[4] The outstanding Śākta poets of the eighteenth century, Rāmprasād Sen and Kamalākānta Bhattācārya, were deeply influenced by the mellow Vaiṣṇava lyrics.[5] Many beautiful songs on Kṛṣṇa were composed by Bhāratacandra Rāya, the celebrated court-poet of Kṛṣṇanagar; these songs were included in his *Vidyāsundara Kāvya*.

1. *Jnānasāgara*, ed. Ābdul Karim Sāhityavisārada, p. 29, verse 249 ; in p. 64, the *fakir* is described as a friend of the Vaiṣṇavas : "*Vaiṣṇava Savera Vandhu| Sāvānera Premasindhu| Fakir Ānandasarovara*"||
2. Adris Chandra Banerji, "Nineteenth Century Art-A Study", J.A.S. Vol. xviii, Nos. 1-4, 1976, p. 91.
3. Vide, Yatīndramohan Bhattācārya, *Bānglār Vaiṣṇava Bhāvāpanna Musalmān Kavi*.
4. These songs are collected in *Śrīhatter Lokasangīt*, ed. Bhowmik and Datta.
5. Examples of the Vaiṣṇava leaven in Śākta songs : *Śākta Padāvalī*, ed. Amarendranāth Rāya, p. 98, song 141 by Raghunāth Rāya, 143 by Rāmprasād Sen (p. 99-100), 145 by Kamalākānta Bhattācārya (p. 101), 144 by Rāmprasād Sen (p. 100), 146 by Rāmlāl Dās Datta (p. 102), 220 by Nabāi Mayarā (pp. 149-150), 221 by Rāmprasād Sen (pp. 150-151), 262 by Rāmprasād Sen (p. 175).

X

The real shortcoming of the Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal consisted in its lack of a definite economic motivation. It failed to effect any change in the existing economic organisation of the villages. The caste-based economic vocations remained unchanged till the establishment of British capitalism in India on a firm basis. Vaiṣṇavism did not disturb the economic basis of casteism. That was why was it possible for the Brāhmaṇas to have a dominant position in the orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava movement.[1] The Vaiṣṇava-Brāhmaṇa equation made the orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, who worked mainly in 'high society', totally incapable of curing the high caste Vaiṣṇavas of their vices and superstitions. The Vaiṣṇavas did not participate as a distinct religious group in any movement against widow-burning, polygamy, child-marriage and baby-killing. They grew self-centred, and ultimately became extremely conservative. The retrogressive aspects of the Vaiṣṇava movement will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

1. This is the conclusion of Nirmal Kumar Basu. *Hindu Samājer Gaḍan*, pp. 111-112.

CHAPTER XX

THE KARTĀBHAJĀ SECT

I

Bengal witnessed the development of numerous deviant Vaiṣṇava or semi-Vaiṣṇava sects in the wake of the Caitanya movement. Most of them emerged as identifiable sects during the seventeenth and the eighteeth centuries. The Āuls and the Bāuls were prominent even in the sixteenth century. Advaita Ācārya and Caitanya were conversant with their *tarjā* or enigmatic language.[1] The Sahajiyā order was not a post-Caitanya development. It stemmed from the Buddhist *Sahaja* tradition.[2] The twelve hundred "shaven heads" converted by Vīrabhadra were probably Buddhist Sahajiyās.

The reasons for the sprouting of numerous deviant orders in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries are not far to seek. The slow consolidation of British power in Bengal before 1757, and the quick downfall of the Moguls after 1709 made life and society in Bengal highly hazardous. The internal and external markets for the indigenous goods were dying out or withering. The Bengal Nawabs lacked the administrative organisation for coping with the various problems of the 'period of transition'.[3] The Bengalis of West Bengal were harassed by the Mārāthā raids which first began in 1742. The penetration of British mercantile capital into the traditional Bengali industries upset the old economic order. Both the Bengali peasants and the Bengali weavers were very badly affected by the work of the foreign monopolists.

On the other hand, both casteism and superstitions were growing strong. Brāhmanical exclusiveness led to the development of

1. CCM, *Antya* Ch. 19, p. 605 : (Sāhitya Ākādemi ed.) "*Bāulke Kahiya Loka Haila Āul | Bāulke Kahiya Hāte Nā Vikāya Cāul || Bāulke Kahiya Kāje Nāhika Āul | Bāulke Kahiya Ihā Kahiyāche Bāul*".|| This *tarjā* was sent to Caitanya by Advaita.
2. This is the considered opinion of S.B. Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, p, 113.
3. M. Athar Āli : The Passing of the Empire : The Mughal Case". *Modern Asian Studies*, 9, 3 (1975), pp. 385-396.

diverse sects among the lower orders. The profession of the *guru* grew very lucrative. But there are records of the starvation of Bengali poets. Even a highly talented poet like Kavikankana Mukundarāma Cakravartī once failed to bring food for his starving children.[1] Another poet named Jīvan Maitra starved.[2] Many Vaiṣṇava poets described themselves as *Duhkhī* or "afflicted'. The The Śākta poet Rāmprasād bemoaned the sharp division of the society into haves and have-nots: "Mother! you have given some people servants, wealth, elephants, horses and chariots. Are they your grandfathers? Have I no relation with you? Mother! you remain unmoved even though you see my miserable condition".[3]

The Brāhmaṇa or upper caste intellectuals might yet survive the tribulations of 'transition' by using their wits and caste status. But the low castes had no such chance. Some men and women of the low castes became *gurus*. Vaiṣṇavism had, at least theoretically, obliterated caste. A low caste man could be a Vaiṣṇava *guru* or even a Tāntrika *guru*, and live comfortably on unearned income. The common people were constantly encouraged to believe that life in this world was absolutely worthless, and that their joys and sorrows were preordained by *Karma*. If they did 'pious' deeds in this world, they were sure to be reborn in rich and happy families. *Guru* worship was a pious deed. The *gurus* had to preach this theory with a view to ensuring their survival in a cruel world.

Minor goddesses like Manasā or Mangalacaṇḍī or Olāicaṇḍī were described as terrible goddesses who were ever ready to inflict severe punishment on those who either ignored or insulted them. Their power to punish people was the subject matter of the *Mangala-kāvyas*. Diseases like cholera were visualised as evil-smelling old

1. *Caṇḍīmangala*, (Sāhitya Ākādemi ed) p. 3: Section 6, contains a vivid description of the tyranny of the *Wāzirs*, *Potdārs*, *Dihidārs*, etc. which compelled Mukundarāma to leave Dāminyā, his ancestral village. His children cried in hunger: "*Taila Binā Kari Snāna/ Kevala Udaka Pāna/ Śiśu Kānde Odanera Tare*".//
2. *Rāmeśvara Racanāvalī*, ed. Pancānana Cakravartī, pp. 252-254.
3. *Bāngālīr Gān*, p. 29: "*Kāre Dilā Dhanajana Mā, Hasti Aśva Rathacaya/ Ogo, Tārā Ki Tor Bāper Thākur, Āmi Ki Tor Keha Nai*"?

haggards, who decimated villages, but fled, before the genuine wonder-worker caught hold of them. Small pox was regarded as "kindness" of "Mother Śītalā". The old social order did not break down. What broke down was the morale of a whole race. Lost in the intricacies of *Navyanyāya*, *Smṛti* and *Jyotiṣa*, the Brāhmaṇa *Paṇḍitas* did nothing to stop the progress of the creeping malais.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-Brāhmaṇa equation made the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas reactionary in the social sense of the term. They did not emulate the noble examples set by Caitanya, Advaita and Nityānanda. Most of them tried to forget the miseries of life in the contemplation, remembrance and analysis of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa sports. Talented Vaiṣṇava poets did not turn their attention to the various problems of the common people. They invariably wrote sophisticated songs on the Vṛndāvana sports. Ultimately their songs grew extremely artificial and stereotyped.

The *guru* was not only the spiritual teacher, but also a medicine-man, a shaman, who was expected to cure incurable diseases. Amulets, protective '*mantra*' (*Rakṣāmantra*), thought-reading, 'rice-reading', 'palm-reading', and even 'plate-reading' grew extremely popular mainly because there was no viable system of law and order. There was also no social hygiene. The amulets, the *mantras*, and *kavacas* were prepared both by the *Śākta* and the Vaiṣṇava *gurus*.[1] The *guru* who could feed hundreds of people with rice cooked for only a few men, or the *guru* who could cure tuberculosis, cancer or leprosy simply by his special *mantra* or *kavaca*, grew wealthy. If the legend of the miracles performed by a *guru* was accepted by the populace, none dared question the *guru's* antecedents or qualifications. The problems of poverty, hunger and disease compelled the helpless masses to flock to the *gurus*, and accept their creeds.

II

A check-list of fifty-six Vaiṣṇava or semi Vaiṣṇava heterodox sects is given below. Most of them are mentioned in the admirable

1. Many manuscripts on Black Magic, written in Bengali, are described in the three volumes of *Puthiparicaya* by Pancānana Maṇḍal.

Bhāratavarṣīya Upāsaka Sampradāya by Akṣayakumār Datta (1820-1886). the indefatigable student of Indian sects, who wrote the sectarian accounts literally lying on the death-bed.[1] However, it is not a definitive catalogue.

A Check-List of the Vaiṣṇava/semi-Vaiṣṇava Sects

1. Āul
2. Asīmatyajā
3. Āśramorodhī
4. Advayavādī
5. Bāul
6. Balarāmī
7. Cuḍādhārī
8. Caraṇpānkhī
9. Darbesh
10. Dārpanarāyaṇī
11. Dārisannyāsī
12. Gauravādī
13. Gauraśyāma
14. Gharpāglā
15. Guruprasādī
16. Gṛhī-Bāul
17. Gairikavirodhī
18. Gauḍeśvara
19. Gobrāi
20. Haribolā
21. Hazrati
22. Haridāsī
23. Jaganmohaṇī
24. Kartābhajā
25. Kālikumārī
26. Kṣepāvāmā
27. Kānupriyā
28. Kiśoribhajana
29. Khusīviśvāsī
30. Māddhvavirodī
31. Nareśapanthī
32. Nāthabhāyā
33. Nitāirādhā
34. Nyāḍā
35. Paramahaṃsa
36. Pratāpacāndī
36. Rāmavallabhī
38. Rāmadāsa
39. Rādheśyāma
40. Rātbhikārī
41. Sahaja
42. Sakhībhāvaka
43. Śambhucāṇḍī
44. Spaṣṭadāyaka
45. Sāin
46. Sāhebdhanī
47. Śiśyāvilāsī
48. Sītārāma
49. Smaraṇapanthī
50. Sect of the 'Mother-in-law'
51. Sect of the 'Elder Brother and Mother'
52. Sāddhvīpanthī
53. Varṇavirāgī
54. Vāmākaupīna
55. Vamśīdhara
56. Yugalabhajana

The followers of Nimvārka, too, had built up some centres iu West Bengal. The first important *gurus* of this sect were Svayaṃ-

1. Lists of these sects are given by Nanīgopāl Gosvāmī in *Caitanyottara Yuge Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava*, pp. 163-201; Navadvīpacandra Gosvāmī Vidyāratna, "*Vaiṣṇava Vratadinanirṇaya*", pp. 51-52; *Kartābhajā Dharmamata O Itihāsa*, Vol 2, pp. 20-21.

bhuūrāma Deva and Mathurā Deva Ācārya. Narahari Deva Ācārya established a Nimvārka monastery in Rājganja, Burdwan town. Narahari's disciple founded a monastery in Ukhḍā. Another monastery was established in Cetuā-Vaikunthapur in Midnāpur. Perhaps the oldest Nimvārka monastery is situated in Kendulī, Bīrbhum, where the annual Jayadeva fair is held. Jayadeva is regarded as a Nimvārka *guru*. The central monastery in Rājganja, Burdwan town, has ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the lesser Nimvārka monasteries in Gopīnāthpur, Indus, Chotakuthī, Chinsurā and Pancamanagar.[1]

Every Bengali had the right to pose as a *guru* or *fakir*. Even mothers-in-law, mothers, and "elder brothers" became sectarian leaders. It would, therefore, be futile to claim that the list given above is exhaustive. The faith which was really plagued by uncontrollable sectarianism was Vaiṣṇavism. The Tāntrikas, too, had differences among themselves. But the concept of *Kulācāra*, the rituals of which were merely diversified in the different Tantras, held them together. The Kaulas, the Kāpālikas, the Aghorīs, the Khaṇḍabhairavas and the Tāntrika Advaitavādins formed a solid bloc. The Vaiṣṇavas differed on fundamental issues. Some of them were believers in the *Svakiyā* theory. The believers in the *Parakiyā* theory formed the majority. But in certain parts of Bengal Kṛṣṇa'a queens Rukminī and Satyabhāmā, and sister Subhadrā were worshipped.[2] The Sahajiyās had unshakable faith in non-duality. The Āuls and the Bāuls were deeply influenced by Sūfism. The majority of the Vaiṣṇavas saw no difference between the *guru*, Caitanya, and Kṛṣṇa. The *gurus*, including the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *gurus*, preached their own divinity, and asked their disciples to believe in their divine rights.[3]

The orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas had no central organisation.

1. I am indebted for the account of the Nimvārka monasteries in Bengal to *Śrī Nimvārka Sampradāyera Ācāryagaṇa O Tānhādera Upadeśāvalī*, (Vol. 5) by Dhananjayadāsa Kāthiyābābā, Appendix, p. 213-217.
2. W. Ward, *Account*, Vol. 3, p. 318.
3. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava belief in the divinity of the *guru* is stated in *Śrī Srī Guruvaiṣṇavabhaktikusumānjalī* by Gauragovindānanda Bhāgavatasvāmī, pp. 14, 25, 28, 29, 37-38.

There was hardly any link between the scattered *Śrīpātas*. The remarkable mobility and organisational skill of the post-Caitanya leaders was not perceptible after the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order was hamstrung by inviolable traditions, rules, and rituals which had evolved between 1600 and 1800. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas utterly failed to check Sahajiyā infiltration into their bases. The amorphous Sahajiyās derived considerable strength from Narahari Sarkār's *Gauranāgara vāda* and the theory of 'unlibidinous libido' enunciated Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. The Sahajiyās had no caste bias. Brāhmaṇa Sahajiyā *gurus* had 'untouchable' followers of both sexes. The 'controlled' orgiasticism of the Sahajiyā sects, most of which remained underground, was basically different from the Tāntrika orgiasticism of blood, wine and flesh. Once a Vaiṣṇava Bāul was observed to have been eagerly participating in a Tāntrika 'circle worship'. While the male and the female Tāntrikas were drinking "consecrated" wine and copulating, the solitary Bāul was merely shaking his neck.[1] This account makes it plain that the Sahajiyās and the Bāuls were the passive colleagues of the Tāntrika leftists. Many of the sects mentioned in the check-list, such as *Āul*, *Advayavādī*, *Bāul*, *Cuḍādhārī*, *Dārīsannyāsī* (Married Ascetic), *Guruprasādi* (Practioners of *jus primae noctis*), *Kiśoribhajana*, *Śiśyāvilāsī* (Lovers of female disciples), *Sāin*, *Sāddhvinī*, etc., were orgiastic Vaiṣṇava sects with different names. The Bāuls composed innumerable songs which are remarkably beautiful. But they earned a good deal of notoriety by adhering to scatalogical rituals. Some orders, such as *Āul*, *Bāul*, *Darbesh*, *Gharpāgla*, *Hazrati*, *Jaganmohaṇī*, *Kartābhajā*, *Khusiviśvāsī*, *Sāin*, and *Sāhebdhanī* were profoundly influenced by *Sūfi* mysticism, which had popular bases in Pānduā (Hooghly), Dacca, and Sylhet. Other notable Sūfi bases were located in 24-Parganas (Magrā), Rongpur (Gāibāndhā), and Mymensingh (Jāmālpur and Kiśorganj).

1. Pramod Kumar Chattopādhyāya, *Tantrābilasīr Sādhusanga*, Vol. I, p. 242. In a recent work, it has been shown that there was hardly any difference between a left Tāntrika "Bhairavī" and a Sahajiyā "Nāyikā". A "Bhairavī" could easily become a "Nāyikā" in a Sahajiyā ceremony. Bimalendu Chakravartī, (*Sākṣātkāre Bhairavī Sādhikā* : Calcutta, Cāruvāk. 1980), gives many examples of this transformation.

The Sahajiyā and the *Sūfi* influenced each other.[1] Considering the great depth of Sahajiya influence in Bengal, a scholar has recently come to the conclusion that Sahajiyā was an atavistic manifestation of the prehistoric traits of the Bengali race.[2]

III

Of the sects mentioned in the in the check-list, the most powerful and popular was the Kartābhajā sect which had its centre in Ghoshpāṛā near the Kalyānī township in Nadiā district. So great was its fame that Dulālcānd, one of the founding fathers of the sect, who died in 1833, was invited to attend the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893.[3] The fair which takes place in Ghoshpāṛā for three days during the *Dola* festival is one of the important religious fairs of West Bengal. It is attended mostly by the peasants of Nadiā and the neighbouring districts. It is also attended by the followers of some other deviant orders, such as *Khusīviśvāsī*, *Sāhebdhanī*, *Balarāmī*, *Nyāḍā*, *Jaganmohaṇī*, *Aghorapanthī*, *Nāthapanthī*, *Kiśorībhanjana*, *Daśanāmī*, *Yogī*, and *Siddheśvarī*. Many *Bāuls*, *Vairāgis*, and assorted *Śāktas* and *Vaiṣṇavas* come to this fair. In a recent fair at Ghoshpārā, 335 shops were set up with a total investment of Rs. 1,31,691.[4] An account of the development of this sect and an analysis of its theology may help us understand the

1. S.B. Dasgupta, op. cit., pp. 164-167; Kṣtimohan Sen, "Madhyayuge Rājasthān O Bānglār Madhye Sādhanār Saṃparka", *Bangaśrī*, Āśvina, 1340 (1933), pp. 385-390.
2. Jāṇhavīkumār Cakravartī, "Prastāvanā : Kartābhajār Rūpa O Svarūpa" in *Kartābhajā Dharmamata O Itihāsa* (hereafter referred to as KDI), Vol. 2, p. 25.
3. Tuṣār Chrttopādhyāya, "Kartābhajā O Chicago'-r Āmantraṇ", *Ānanda Bāzār Patrikā*, Sunday, April 29, 1979, p. 4.
4. Mānik Sarkār, "Ghoshpārār Melā" in KDI, Vol. 2, pp. 56-57; also Sudhīr Chakravartī, "Ghoshpārāya Satīmār Melā", *Desh*, April 29, 1978, pp. 57-64. See also, the vivid description of the Ghoshpārā fair in "Kālakūta"s novel, *Kothāya Se Jana Āchhe*, publisded in *Śāradīya Desh* B.E. 1389 (1982) pp. 92-138. One of the principal chanacters in this brilliant novel is the noted historian, sociologist and folklorist, Benoy Ghosh.

socio-religious conditions which favoured the growth of more than fifty Vaiṣṇava or semi-Vaiṣṇava orders in Bengal.

The founder of the Kartābhajā sect was Āulcānd or Āulecānd, a semi-historical figure, who was probably born in 1686 and died in 1779. According to a hypothesis he belonged to the Qādiri order of the *Sūfis* which had been set up by Ābdul Kādir Gilānī in the sixteenth century.[1] There are some variations of the Āulcānd legend which are summarised as follows :

Legend I

Mahādeva, a betel-grower of Ulā village (Nadiā)[2] one day found eight-year old Āulcānd of unknown antecedents stranded in his betel-field. The boy was found on the first Friday of the month of Phālguṇa in 1774. The boy lived with Mahādeva for twelve years. Later he lived with different persons in both West and East Bengal till he was twenty-seven. He then renounced the world and became a *Fakir* mendicant. It is not clear whether Āulcānd was a Muslim by birth or whether he was a Muhammadan proselyte. Later Āulcānd arrived at Berjā village where Rāmśaraṇ Pāl, Hātu Ghoṣa and some other leaders of the Kartābhajā sect became his disciples.[3] Āulcānd's sojourn in East Bengal is a considerable point. He possibly became a mendicant of the Āul sect while he was in East Bengal. He probably visited Dacca and Sylhet. The reason for this assumption is that Dacca is repeatedly mentioned in *Bhāver Gīta*, in which the theology of the Kartābhajā sect is stated in enigmatic language.[4] Sylhet is men-

1. Theory of Bimal Kumār Mukhopādhyāya, in KDI, Vol. 2, pp. 7-12, Āulcand was indubitably a *Sūfi*, but his affiliation is uncertain. He might have also belonged to the *Qādādāri* order of the *Sūfis*, a centre of which was set up by Sbāh Safi-ud-din Shāhi in Pāṇḍuā (Hooghly) towards the end of the thirteenth century. J. Long, "The Banks of the Bhāgīrathī", in *Select Papers*, ed. M.P. Sāhā, p. 63; vide, Suniti Kumar Chattopādhyāya, "Darāp Khān Ghāji", *Viśvabhāratī Patrikā*, Year 5, No. 4, pp. 201-212.
2. According to Long, Ulā had one thousand Brāhamaṇa families, "The fools of Ulā" were quite notorious. Long, "The Banks of the Bhāgīrathī", op. cit., p. 72.
3. Akṣayakumār Datta, *Bharatavarṣīya Upāsaka Saṃpradāya*, (ed. Benoy Ghosh), p. 120.
4. *Bhāver Gita*, p. 73 : p. 80 : Question 1; p. 81 : Questions 1 and 2; p. 82 : Question 3, Answer 3; p. 84; Question 5; Question 6; p. 85, Answer 6; Answer 7.

tioned in only one song.[1] But Triveṇī is not mentioned in them. In one song there is a reference to a brilliant jem preserved in Dacca city.[2] The reference may signify God, and God's *unrevealed* (in Bengali, *Dhākā*) abode. It may also mean a powerful sage, stationed in Dacca, who was possibly Āulcānd's preceptor. The reference to Sylhet, too, is significant. Sylhet was the centre of the Jaganmohaṇī sect, which preached theism and *guru*-worship. Was Āulcānd influenced by the Jaganmohaṇī order? It has already been mentioned that the followers of the Jaganmohaṇī sect attend the Ghoshpāṛā fair. An *Āul* of East Bengal named Alakh Shāh preached *Nāgerividyā* or neo-Platonism. and Hindu-Muslim unity in the middle of the eighteenth century. He had a great influence over the *Āuls* and *Bāuls* of Dacca, Mymensingh, Chāndpur and Barisāl districts. Was Āulcānd a disciple of Alakh Shāh?[3] Very possibly Āulcānd was deeply influenced by Jaganmohaṇī theism and *guru*-worship, and also by the syncretic ideals preached by the contemporary *Sūfi Fakirs* of both East and West Bengal. In West Bengal both literate and illiterate Hindus were enchanted by the *Sūfi* stress on the idea of God as a Lover. Several *Pir* manuscripts of a Hindu named Rādhācaraṇ Gopa or Rādhap Gopa have been found.[4]

Legend II

According to the Kartābhajā sectarian accounts. Āulcānd was Caitanya in disguise. Two reasons compelled Caitanya to don the garb of the Muhammadan *Fakir*. Firstly, both Caitanya and Advaita felt that an excessive stress on the ascetic ideal had made the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas extremely unpopular. "The rice husked by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas remained unsold in the market". In the second place, Caitanya saw that many imposters were organising fake Vaiṣṇava orders. These orders constituted a terrible threat to ethics and genuine spirituality. These untoward developments shattered Caitanya's placidity. He decided to 'disappear' from Purī. Caitanya did not die because he was immortal God. He disappeared from Purī and appeared, sometime between 1760 and 1770, as young and

1. Ibid., p. 159 : Answer 1.
2. Ibid., p. 84 : Answer 6.
3. Kṣitimohan Sen, "Madhyayuge Rājasthān O Bānglār Madhye Sādhanār Saṃparka", op. cit., pp. 386-389.
4. These manuscripts are mentioned in *Puthiparicaya* by Pancānan Maṇḍal, Vol. 2, pp. 11, 16. In p. 77, there is description of a ms. entitled 'Horān Jarip', which is apparently a Koranic work, with lots of *Sūfi*, Vaiṣṇava and *Nātha* technical terms. The ms. was collected by Abdul Karim Sāhitya-visārada.
5. Vide, Manulāl Miśra, *Kartābhajā Dharmer Ādivṛttānta Vā Sahajatattva Prakāśa*, 3rd ed. pp. 1-71.

handsome *Fakir* Āulcānd in Triveṇī. Caitanya-Āulcānd miraculously crossed the Gangā, and came to Jagadīshpur village, where Rāmśaraṇ Pāl, a *Sadgopa* agriculturist, found him. Rāmśaraṇ immediately became his disciple, conversed with him throughout the day and night, and brought him home. Later Caitanya-Āulcānd initiated twenty-two men as his disciples.

Legend III

Fakir Āulcānd was somehow involved in the raids of the Mārāthā Bārgīs (1744). He was arrested by some officers of Nawāb Ālivardi Khān (1740-1756). But he miraculously escaped from the dungeon and arrived at Jagadīshpur village.[1]

Legend IV

It is said that Rāmśaraṇ Pāl met Āulcānd in a market at Sukhsāgar, Nadiā, where Pāl had gone to buy rice. This meeting took place in 1769-1770, when a terrible famine was raging rampant throughout Bengal.[2]

Legend V

According to this legend Rāmśaraṇ, son of Nanda Ghosh of Jagadīshpur, was the Manager of the Rāyabāhādur *zamindars* of Benāpur village. Āulcānd once cured Rāmśaraṇ of his colic pain. The patient at once became his disciple.[3]

Legend VI

Rāmśaraṇ first married Gaurī Ghosh, daughter of Śiśu Ghosh of Jagadīshpur village. By his first marriage he had two daughters named Manomohinī and Jagattāriṇī. After the death of his first wife and two daughters, he married Sarasvatī, daughter of Govinda Ghosh, a landlord of Govindapur village. Rāmśaraṇ and Sarasvatī had a son who later became the pope of the Kartābhajā sect. His name was Dulālcānd.

Legend VII

According to the sectarian tradition Rāmśaraṇ's father was Śankar Pāl. Āulcānd witnessed the marriage of Rāmśaraṇ's eldest daughter Annapūrṇā.[5]

1. Manulāl Miśra, *Bhāver Gīter Vyākhyā*, pp. 15-18.
2. Sukumar Sen in KDI, Vol. 2, p. 36.
3. Umā Rāy in KDI, Vol. 2, pp. 49-50. This legend occurs in Rādhākānta Gangopādhyāya's *Kuler Pāt O Ghoṣapāḍā*, pp. 26-28.
4. Umā Rāy in KDI, Vol. 2, p. 49.
5. Manulāl Miśra, *Kartābhajā Dharmer Ādi Vṛttānta*, pp. 51-52.

Legend II, as stated by Manulāl Miśra, clearly shows the link between the 'little tradition' of the Kartābhajā and the 'great tradition' of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal. This link had to be shown for a couple of reasons. In the first place, Āulcānd's identification as Caitanya lent respectability to Kartābhajā sect. Secondly, the description of Āulcānd, a Muhammadan, as Caitanya's *doppelganger*, made the Kartābhajā sect popular both among the Muhammadan and the Hindu peasantry. The significant personal factor in the Katābhajā movement was not represented by Āulcānd, the mysterious *Fakir*, but by Caitanya, the celebrated Vaiṣṇava leader of Bengal.

IV

The first twenty-two disciples of Āulcānd are mentioned in four lists, namely :

A. *Bhāver Gīta* (p. 231 of the 1882 ed.)
B. *Bhāratavarṣīya Upāsaka Saṃpradāya* by Akṣayakumār Datta (pp, 120, 127. ed. Benoy Ghosh)
C. *Bhāver Gīter Vyākhyā* by Manulāl Miśra (p. 22)
D. *Kartābhajan Dharmer Ādi Vṛttānta* by Manulāl Miśra (pp. 27-28)

There is no difference of opinion about the total number of Āulcānd's first disciples. But the names of the disciples mentioned in these lists are in certain instances different. In list C the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava incarnations have been mentioned. The incarnations were presumably invented towards the end of the nineteenth century when the orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas mounted a massive assault on the Kartābhajās and other deviant orders. The most authentic of these lists is *List A*, which was given in *Bhāver Gīta*. The collection was published in 1882 with the approval of Rasiklāl Pāl, the contemporaray leader of the Kartābhajā sect.

Disciple	*Mentioned in Lists*	*Incarnation according to List C*	*Village according to List A*
1. Āndirāma	A D	—	Yaśaḍā
2. Becu Ghoṣa	A B C D	Rāmānanda Basu	Jagadīshpur
3. Bhīma Rāya Rājput	A C D	Jīva Gosvāmin	Dudhkumār
4. "Dedo" Kṛṣṇa	A C D	Dāmodara Paṇḍita	Yaśaḍā

5. "Godā" Kṛṣṇa	A C D	Vakreśvara	Yaśaḍā
6. Hātu Ghoṣa	A B C D	Govindānanda	Yaśaḍā
7. Hari Ghoṣa	A B	—	Jagadīshpur
8. Kānāi Ghoṣa	A B C D	Mādhavācārya	Jagadīshpur
9. Kinu Govinda	A C	Raghunātha Bhatta	Yaśaḍā
10. Lakṣmīkānta	A B C D	Kamalākar Piplāi	Yaśaḍā
11. Manohara Dāsa	A B C D	Gopāla Bhatta	Yaśaḍā
12. Nitāi	A C D	Vāsu Ghoṣa	Jagadīshpur
13. Nityānanda	A B C D	Gadādhara Paṇḍita	Yaśaḍā
14. Nayana	A B C D	Sundarānanda	Yaśaḍā
15. Nidhirāma	A B C D	Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita	Jagadīshpur
16. Pāncakaḍi	A C D	Banamālī Paṇḍita	Jagadīshpur
17. Rāmśaraṇ Pāl	A B C D	—	Jagadīshpur
18. Ramānathā Dāsa I	A C D	Jāṇhavā Devī	Yaśaḍā
19. Śankara	A B C	Śivānanda Sena	Jagadīshpur
20. Śiśurāma	A B C	—	Jagadīshpur
21. Śyamā	A	—	Dudhkumār
22. Viśu Dāsa	A B C D	Śikhi Māhāti	Yaśaḍā

ADDITIONAL NAMES

23. Ānandarāma	B C	Rāmānanda Rāya
24. Brahmahari [?]	D	
25. Bholā Nyāḍā	C D	Kāśī Miśra
26. Govinda	B D	
27. Kinu	B D	
28. Khelārāma	B D	
29. Kṛṣṇadāsa	B	
30. Pāncu Ruidās	B	
31. Śyāmādāsa Bairāgī	B C	Jagannātha Dāsa
32. Śyāma Kānsārī	B	
33. Sītārāma	C	Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa
34. Vrajahari	C	Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma

According to Akṣayakumār Datta, eight disciples eventually became more prominent than the others. They were Bhīma Rāya Rājput, Becu Ghoṣa, Hāri Ghoṣa, Hātu Ghoṣa, Kānāi Ghoṣa, Nidhirāma, Rāmśaraṇ Pāl, and Śyāmādāsa.[1] *Fakir* Āulcānd had no caste prejudice. A brass-smith named Syāma Kānsārī and an untouchable named Pāncu Ruidās became his disciples. In the hagio-

1. *Bhāratavarṣiya Upāsaka Samradāya*, p. 127.

graphical transformations reputed Brāhmaṇa Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas were consigned to much lower castes.

V

In lists C and D, Rāmśaraṇ Pāl and his wife Sarasvatī are referred to as *Ādipuruṣa* (literally, Adam) and *Ādyāśakti* (The Universal Female Principle).[1] The elevation of the couple to a vague demi-divine status merits consideration.

The relation between Rāmśaraṇ Pāl and Āulcānd was not always very cordial. Āulcānd's eccentric behaviour created tension. He was given a room in Rāmśaraṇ's house. There he spent days and nights in a squatting posture in absolute silence and seclusion. But when the marriage ceremony of Rāmśaraṇ's eldest daughter, Annapūrṇā, was taking place, Āulcānd unexpectedly came out of his room, appeared before the ladies stripped to the buff, and danced a jig. Rāmśaraṇ took him to task for this wanton conduct. Āulcānd got angry and decided to move off. But Rāmśaraṇ and his wife humbly requested him to stay there. The request was honoured,[2]

The next mischief of the *Āul* was disastrous. He was fond of playing with young cowherds. One day he slapped a young boy so hard that he died. Many villagers now wanted to teach the erratic *Fakir* a sound lesson. Rāmśāraṇ found it extremely difficult to save him. In desperation Rāmśaraṇ just kicked the dead boy's head. The boy at oncc opened his eyes and sat up. This incident led to Āulcānd's departure from Rāmśaraṇ's house. He went to Boāliā village where he died and lay burried.

It is not difficult to understand that the legend of the dead boy's resurrection at Rāmśaraṇ's kick was concocted to show that Rāmśaraṇ, too, had the power to perform miracles. In fact miracle was the salt of the Kartābhajā sect. It was often performed by Āulcānd, Rāmśaraṇ and Sarasvatī. The *Āul* was a first class wonder-worker.

1. *Kartābhajan Dharmer Ādi Vṛttānta*, pp. 9, 57-69.
2. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
3. Ibid., pp. 17-20, 33-35.

He cured all sorts of diseases, including eczema, leprosy, and filariasis.[1] It was believed that there was no 'duality' between Āulcānd and Rāmśaraṇ.[2] But the two wonder-workers could not co-exist in the same house. After Āulcānd's departure Rāmśaraṇ became the *Ādipuruṣa* of the Kartābhajā sect. The eight prominent disciples accepted him as the pope.

Rāmśaran died in 1783 or thereabouts.[3] His wife Sarasvatī had a strong personality. She now became the leader of the sect. Her son Dulālcānd was born in 1775. As the personification of the Universal Female Principle, Sarasvatī, too, had miraculous powers. She was a direct disciple of Āulcānd. She was reputed to have cured blindness, barrenness. and other diseases. Even her servant Bānkācānd developed miraculous powers. He could easily tame wild tigers. Sarasvatī converted some notorious robbers. These legends, faithfully recorded by Manulāl Miśra, make it plain that Kartābhajā thrived on superstition and magic.[4]

Rāmśaran's son Dulālcand (1775-1832/1833), who was undoubtedly a talented man, became the Kartābhajā pope. His mother Sarasvatī died probably in 1841.[5] Dulālcānd built a theological base for the growing sect, without belittling the unbelievable legend of his mother's miraculous powers. Her name (*Satī Mā* or Chaste Mother) was associated with some miracle-spots in Ghoshpārā, like *Dālimtalā* (shade of the pomegranate tree), and *Himasāgara* (a duck-pond within the sacred compound). The worship of the pomegranate tree where hundreds of men and women pray, is reminiscent of tree, worship. Under Dulālcānd's leadership Kartābhajā became a powerful movement. He was regarded as the incarnation of both Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya. Ward wrote in 1811 : "Dulāl pretends that he has 4,00,000 disciples spread over Bengal".[6] It was claimed

1. Ibid., pp. 20-23.
2. *Kartābhajana Dharmer Ādivṛttānta*, p. 13.
3. KDI, Vol. 2, p. 12.
4. *Kartabhajana Dharmer Ādivṛttānta*, pp. 57-71.
5. Dulālcānd's dates are given in *Bhāver Gīta*, Intro. p. 2, fn. See also KDI, Vol. 2, p. 63.
6. Ward, *Account*, Vol. 3, p. 264.

on behalf of the sect that both Rammohun Roy and Alexander Duff were closely acquainted with him.[1] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Śaśīpada Bandyopādhyāya, an important Brāhma leader, social worker, and editor of the *Bhārataśramajīvī*, (the first workers' journal published in Bengali), was known to have sympathy for the Kartābhajā sect because of its innate egalitarianism.[2] Towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, Rājā Jayanarāyaṇa Ghoṣāla of Bhukailāsh, Calcutta, who was the author of an important work entitled *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa*, expressed, in very clear language, his respect for Dulālcānd.[3] In all probability Jayanārāyaṇa was a disciple of Dulālcānd.[4] Dulālcānd had considerable poetic talent. According to one of his disciples, "he wore the head-gear *Tāz* like a Muhammadan *Fākir*, and sang songs with *Sārangi* accompaniment".[5] Roughly seventy percent of the songs of *Bhāver Gīta* refer to such business terms as 'company', 'merchants', 'agents', 'brokers', petty traders', 'porters' 'stockists', 'indigo trade with Arab countries',[6] 'merchantmen', 'shares', 'share-capital', 'invoice', 'trade mark', etc. *Zamindāri* technical terms, which are frequently found in the Śākta songs of Rāmprasād Sen, are scarcely noticed in *Bhāver Gīta*, most of the songs of which were composed by Dulālcānd. The frequent and expert use of the vocabulary of mercantilism in these enigmatic songs points to two possibilities. (1) Dulālcānd had much experience as a businessman. Like many contemporary landlords he invested his papal earnings in building up a big estate. The income from his estate was re-invested in trade

1. KDI, Vol. 1, p. 10.
2. Kuladāprasād Mallik, *Navayuger Sādhanā*, 2nd ed. 1913, pp. 89-90.
3. *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa*, p. 299, verse 25 : *Tomate Viśvāsa Mora Thāke Cirakāla| Viśeṣa Prārthanā Ei Durlabha Dulāla||*
4. Dulālcānd's letter to Jayanārāyaṇa, requesting him to stay at Ghoshpāṛā at least for a week is quoted in *Bhāver Gīta*, p. 231 : *Yadi Ichhā Thāke Vija Karite Ropana| Ucita Tvarita Punah Atra Āgamana.|| Dui Māsa Bhukailāsa Vātite Sthiti| Mamadhāma Ye Viśrāma Saptama Rāti|| Vṛddhi have Hṛdipadme Vijera Śākti| Śasī Iti Parimita Nivedana Iti||*
5. "Kartābhajā Sangita" in *Sangīta Koṣa*, p. 749.
6. See *Bhāvera Gīta*, p. 42, Question 3; p. 73, Answer 1; export of indigo to Arab countries is mentioned in Question 2 of p. 70.

or trade agency. (2) He composed most of the songs for circulation among the urban new rich,and carefully used a jargon and imagery which they might easily understand. In fact Dulālcānd talked both shop and mysticism.

VI

J.N. Bhattācārya wrote that the Kartābhajā *gurus* exacted a sort of *Chauth*, or the 'fourth part', which was claimed by the Mārāthā chiefs from their peasants.[1] According to him the *Kartābhajā gurus* had regular 'bailiffs' and 'agents' who collected the revenue from their followers. "Each agent of the Kartā is generally on very intimate terms with a childless and friendless widow in the village or group of villages entrusted to his charge...the agents of the Kartā are required to pay over their collections to him at a grand levee held by him at his family residence in the month of March."

According to Kartābhajā tradition, Āulcānd advised his disciples to deposit half of their annual income to Sarasvatī. Moreover, each disciple of Sarasvatī and Dulālcānd had to pay a rupee as the fee of initiation. They had also to pay *Praṇāmī* or salutation fee when they attended the fair held in Ghoṣpāṛā in the month of Phālguna. The rate of the salutation fee was not fixed. Each disciple paid it according to his/her ability. To be precise, the sources of the income of the Kartābhajā pope were as follows:

1. Yearly tax collected from the bailiffs and agents, who collected them from disciples living in different villages and towns. The rate of the commission is not known.
2. Half of the annual earnings of the lesser *gurus*, some of whom were 'commissioned' agents of the Kartābhajā pope.
3. Initiation Fee of Re. 1/-.
4. *Praṇāmī* or salutation fee.[2]
5. "*Dāyīka*" Fee.

1. J.N. Bhattācārya, op. cit., pp. 383-84.
2. *Kartābhajan Dharmer Ādi Vṛttānta*, p. 30; Akṣayakumār Datta, op. cit., pp. 124-125; KDI, Vol. 2, p. 59; Benoy Ghosh ed. *Sāmayikapatre Bāṅglār Samājacitra*, Vol. 4, pp. 698-99.

No wonder that the Ghoshpāṛā pope grew affluent very soon. Wilson refers to their "artful encroachment upon the authority of the old hereditary teachers or Gossains".[1] The Brāhmaṇa and the Vaiṣṇava *gurus* began a propaganda barrage against them.

VII

The Kartābhajā *gurus* recognised different categories of disciples. The natural bent of the disciple was first considered. The disciple who had "the property of the soil" was believed to be patient, condescending, morally sound, soft in speech and manners, and never given to excesses. This type of man or woman was preferred as a neophyte. His/her caste was never a factor.[2] Any person belonging to any faith whatsoever might be initiated as a Kartābhajā. A Hindu could worship his idols and his 'domestic' *guru*, and yet be a Kartābhajā.

It is said that Āulcānd himself emphasised the distinction between *Vyāvahāra* or social behaviour, and *Paramārtha* or the supreme spiritual interest.[3] *Vyāvahāra* signified the performance of social duties and observance of social norms. *Paramārtha* signified the inviolable right of the individual to seek spiritual truth in any manner which was consonant with *Pravṛtti* or natural inclination.[4] The Kartābhajā were advised to assert their individual freedom in matters concerning faith. But they were also advised to respect social norms.

The Kartābhajā *guru* had to examine the nature of the neophyte before he gave him the final and irrevocable *mantra*. The man or woman with "the property of the soil" was preferred, because, with patience and humility, innate toughness and mental discipline, he/she might be able to seek spiritual truth after the Kartābhajā manner, and to live a secret life, without violating social

1. Wilson, *Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus*, p. 97.
2. *Bhāver Gīter Vyākhyā*, pp. 51-53.
3. *Kartābhajan Dharmer Ādi Vṛttānta*, pp. 73-74.
4. *Bhāver Gīter Vyākhyā*, p. 59.

norms. Even though a neophyte might lack "the property of the soil", he/she might very well develop that property by following the *guru's* advice with meticulous care. If he/she failed to develop that property, he/she was not given the final *mantra*. Since Kartābhajā (worship of the *Kartā*) itself was *Paramārtha*, it could very well be cultivated by people whose *Vyāvahāra* compelled them to worship different gods and goddesses.[1] The theory of the adjustment of *Paramārtha* with *Vyāvahāra* was really one of the development of a dual personality. The Kartābhajā understood that it might not at all be possible for an individual to maintain the façade of a social man while he/she was performing the Kartābhaja worship. The *guru*, therefore, laid down the following conditions and categories :[2]

FOUR CONDITIONS

Pravarta	*Sādhaka*	*Siddhi*	*Nivṛtti*

FOUR TYPES OF ELIGIBILITY

Sādhu	*Satī*	*Sura*	*Mahat*

INTERMINGLING OF CONDITIONS AND TYPES OF ELIGIBILITY

Pravarta-Sādhu	*Sādhaka-Satī*	*Siddhi-Sura*	*Nivṛtti-Mahat*

We are deeply indebted to Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa for a lucid explanation of these technical terms.[3] The celebrated Paramahaṃsa once had an opportunity of learning the meanings of these terms from the Kartābhajā themselves.

Pravarta means the state of the neophyte. The higher state is that of the *Sādhaka*. At the *Sādhaka* stage the disciple is permitted to be associated with a woman, who was to be his wife. The female partner of the *Sādhaka* is called *Satī* (Chaste woman). That is why *Sādhaka* and *Satī* form a single word, *Sādhaka-Satī*. The third stage of *Siddhi* (Achievement) is that of the lesser gods. That is why *Sura* and *Siddhi* are combined together, The *Siddha* condi-

1. Ibid., p. 61.
2. *Kartābhajan Dharmer Ādi Vṛttānta*, p. 83.
3. *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta*, Vol. 2, p. 89; p. 142; p. 154; Vol. 4, pp. 33, 80, 134; 145; 164; Vol. 5. pp. 193-194.

tion is the *natural* (*Sahaja*) condition. Apparently the *Siddha* is a normal and social being. But the inner man is like an active volcano, throbbing with tremendous love for God. Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa himself was once described as a *Siddha*. The highest stage is *Nivṛtti*. It is the stage of man's non-duality with the cosmic greatness of God. At this stage the Kartābhajā is *jiyante marā*, or "un-living". He is "un-living", because at this stage he achieves total liberation from the shackles of desire. The *Kartābhajā guru* conventionally belongs to the highest category. The *Pravarta* neophyte is allowed to exhibit the external symbols of his faith. The *Sādhaka* may or may not exhibit them. The *Siddha* and the *Nivṛtta* are not required to abide by any sectarian convention.[1] The Kartābhajā had to promise that, excepting the caste rule, they would violate no other Hindu convention, or conventional morality. They were forbidden to associate with the wicked, tell a lie, commit adultery or violence, kill, steal, eat any leftover or meat, drink wine, and smoke in *Vaithak* or congregation. A very strict ban on sexual promiscuity, or harbouring in one's mind a libidinous thought, was imposed. Covetousness was condemned. The Kartābhajā was also forbidden to use harsh or swear-words.[2]

According to a scholar, "it is observed from extensive field studies...that the Sahajiyā-Tāntrik tradition of orgiasticism has been in practice among the Kartābhajā sect all through."[3] But the theory of the 'Tāntrika' nature of the Kartābhajā sect is not based upon incontestable evidence. There is hardly any clear reference to purely Tāntrika concepts and rituals in the Kartābhajā songs which are collected in *Bhāver Gīta*, and which constitute the most authoritative theological text of the sect. The technical terms of the left Tantras are not found in them.

1. *Bhāver Gīter Vyākhyā*, pp. 114-115.
2. Akṣayakumār Datta, op. cit., p. 122; *Kartābhajan Dharmer Ādi Vṛttānta*, p. 114.
3. Tushar Chattopādhyāya : Some observations on Guru Cult and Minor Religious Sects of Bengal : Communication", *Society and Change*, [Calcutta], January-March, 1981, pp. 207-211 ; also, "reply", Ibid., pp. 211-214; Ramākānta Cakravartī, "Guru worship and Religious Reformation in Bengal : 1700-1900", *Society And Change*, Vol. I, No. 4.

It should also be noted that the word *Sahaja* often used in the songs cannot be easily or exactly explained. The well-known categories and complicated measurements of Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā *Rasa*, *Raṭi*, *Prīṭi*, *Bhāva*, *etc.* the main themes of the vast Sahajiyā literature of Bengal-are never stressed in the aforementioned songs and their authoritative interpretations. Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā hagiology is not mentioned in them. It seems that the sect was to some extent influenced by the *Gauranāgara* concept, which was not really apostatic.

The Kartābhajā *Barātī* had to promise that he would not perform coitus with an extra-conjugal partner, and that he would not also frequently indulge in the pleasures of sex even with his own wife. Do these recorded facts suggest that the Kartābhajā practised orgiasticism? Some of the advanced Kartābhajā worshippers might have been permitted to practise their creed with fixed and properly initiated female partners at certain predetermined stages of their spiritual culture. The available evidence does not suggest that the Kartābhajā followed the left Tāntrika method of 'instant' initiation of female partners. Even supposing that orgies took place in certain demoralised Kartābhajā circles, one cannot say that orgiasticism was sanctioned by Kartābhajā theology. Rules were laid down for ethical conduct in Kartābhajā *Vaithaks* or congregations.

The Kartābhajā *guru* was called *Mahāśaya* (Sir). The disciple was called *Barātī* (The term means a Member of the Bridegroom's party). A female *Barātī* was addressed as Sister. A male *Barātī* was addressed as Brother. Just before the initiation the following conversation took place :[4]

Guru : Are you sure of your ability to follow the precepts of our religion?

Barati : Yes, Sir, I am.

Guru : You shall not tell a lie. You shall not steal. You shall not perform coitus with another man's wife. You shall not also frequently perform coitus with your own wife.

Baraii : I shall not do any of these things.

4. Akṣayakumār Datta, op. cit., p. 112.

Guru : Now say : "You are truth. Whatever you say is true".
Barati : You are Truth. Whatever you say is true.

The neophyte had to pay sixteen *ānnās* or one rupee to the *guru* as the fee of initiation. The *mantra* of initiation, in Ward's translation, was as follows :

O Sinless Lord ! O great Lord ! At thy pleasure I
go and return ! Not a moment I am without Thee !
I am ever with Thee ! Save, O Great Lord ![1]

This was called *Ṣola Ānnā Mantra*[2] (or, the *complete mantra*). The *Vaithak* or congregation was first held by Āulcānd himself on a Friday night. It was attended by the original twenty-two disciples. According to the sectarian account, even in the first *Vaithak* Āulcānd appointed Rāmśaraṇ Pāl the *guru-Mahānta* of the sect. He advised the other *gurus* to maintain secrecy about the Kartābhajā worship. He advised them to pay Sarasvatī, Rāmśaraṇ's wife, half portion of their annual income. Later the congregation of the Friday night worshipped the lady as *Adyāśakti*.[3] On Fridays the Kartābhajās eat a vegetarian meal and abstain from coitus with their wives.[4]

Dāyīka Majlis is another important Kartābhajā ritual. The word, *Dāyīka* means an initiated disciple 'mentally' comissioned to perform a number of pious deeds. In other words, a disciple who takes a vow is a *Dāyīka* (meaning, responsible disciple). A *Dāyīka* had to 'confess' before his *guru*. The confession was a necessary ritual. Several *Dāyīkas* met in a *majlis* or assembly and confessed.[5] Anyone who wanted to be a *Dāyīka* had to pay the *guru* a fee. The confession was ordinarily a group affair.

1. Ward, Account, Vol. 3, p. 264, fn.
2. Wilson, op. cit., p. 97 fn.
3. *Satyadharma Upāsanā Vā Śukravārer Yājan Praṇālī*, p. 48.
4. KDI, Vol. 2, p. 24.
5. *Kartābhajan Dharmer Ādi Vṛttānta*, p. 30.

VIII

The Kartābhajā sect represented a major dissension from Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy. It repudiated the conservative and ascetic ideals and the formalism of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. The theological ideas of the Kartābhajā sect were first expressed by Dulālcānd in the language of poetry and music. These songs were noted by four disciples named, respectively, Nīlakantha, Rāmcaraṇ Chattopādhyāya, Kāśīnāth Basu and Śambhūnāth Bhattācārya. The songs were published with the approval of Rasiklāl Pāl and Īśvaracandra Pāl, the Ghoshpāṛā *gurus*, in B.S. 1289 (1882) by Ramesh Candra Ghosh Dās. The anthology was entitled *Bhāver Gīta*. A good number of these songs were composed by Dulālcānd's disciples. In these songs Dulālcānd is referred to as Lāl Śaśī. His name was broken up. Du was detached from Dulāl. For cānd, the synonym śaśī was used. lāl in Bengali means Red. Śaśī means the moon. The language of these songs is highly enigmatic. The songs are full of imageries, metaphors, analogies and suggestions. Dulālcānd was the inventor of a mystic language called *Tyākśālī Bol* or *Language of the Mint*. A selection of the 'Mint Sentences' is given by Manulāl Miśra.[1] Some of these sentences are literally translated below :

> One must not forget the stage when one collected cakes made of cowdung.
> If one is not born in one's parental abode one would not be able to preserve one's good manners.
> In connection with the "Cause", a dip in the muddy pond is better than a dip in the Gangā.
> If one dies alive, one never dies.
> All jackals make the same sound.
> When a maid-servant becomes a queen, she must remember that she was once a maid-servant.
> The maggot born in excrement must return to excrement even after it is lodged in heaven.

Only a few songs are interpreted in Manulāl Miśra's *Bhāver Gīter Vyākhyā*. A casual reader may not feel tempted to read these

1 . *Kartābhajan Dharmer Ādi Vṛttānta*, pp. 107-114.

songs, many of which sound like gibberish. But it must be noted that these songs, which are supposed to have been sung between 1825 and 1826, were composed in spoken Bengali. Dulālcānd and his disciples carefully avoided the literary style at a time when Bengali prose, written without punctuation, was almost indistinguishable from Sanskrit, and when 'spoken' Bengali was not the literary medium. If, however, one carefully analyses the sentences of these songs, one would find in them one or two statements fraught with meaning. Such statements lie hidden like needles in haystacks. Another important feature of these songs is that they are presented in the form of questions and answers in the manner of the contemporary *Kavi* songs. The statements laden with a definite meaning are usually made in the second stanza which, according to the publisher of *Bhāver Gīta*, should be read first.[1]

IX

To extract theological concepts from these enigmatic songs is obviously very difficult. The concepts may, however, be discerned in the general import of the songs. In many songs, however, definite statements have been made. But these statements lie hidden, like needles in haystacks, among sentences, the import of which is not always clear. The basic theological ideas, *as I have understood them*, are stated below. Some technical terms are explained by Manulāl Miśra in *Bhāver Gīter Vyākhyā*. But unfortunately this work deals mainly with the traditions of the sect and contains very little information about the theological ideas of the founding fathers.

GOD

God is far above worldly desires.[2] Matter cannot be separated from Brahman.[3] God is Love. He is not affected by the three

1. *Bhāver Gīta*, preface, p. 2. It is interesting to note that the historians of Bengali "Prose" have so far ignored these songs, which were written in "Spoken" Bengali. The linguistic peculiarity of *Bhāver Gīta* deserves a special study by competent scholars.
2. *Bhāver Gīta*, p. 9, answer 13.
3. Ibid., p. 12, answer 2.

Guṇas.[1] There is only one God with different attributes, of which life is but one.[2] God is full of joy[3] There is an idea that God does not exclusively belong to any person. From the *Parakīyā* relation both God and His lover derive joy in an equal measure.[4] But there is also the *Svakiyā* theory which cannot be easily brushed aside. According to this theory a genuine *Rasika* can, with the *Guru's* grace, make God fall exclusively in love with him. The object of love and the fulfilment of love are undifferentiable. *Rasa* is the common factor in the sweet relation between God and His lover. *Rasa* is the basic property of the repository where God, *Rasa,* is preserved. There is no difference between the container and the thing contained.[5] As the guild-master controlls the guild, so God controls life in this world.[6] God is, however, both the ruler and the ruled.[7]

God is the transcendental lover.[8] Brahman, Viṣṇu and Śiva correspond respectively to *Rajas, Satya and Tamas*.[9] God has a soft corner in His heart for the poor, for He has organised a paltroon of the poor.[10]

Everything in God's creation has both merits and demerits.[11] God appears as Man in the four ages.[12]

Niranjana created the three worlds out of water.[13]

God is not dependent on social rules and custom. He may be driven off. But He returns. Denunciation makes him glad. God is Mad (*Kṣepā*) because He is so unusual.[14] God, Love,

1. Ibid., pp. 15-16, question 3.
2. Ibid., p. 16, answer 4.
3. Ibid., p. 20, answer 3.
4. Ibid., p. 33, question 1.
5. p. 33, answer 1.
6. p. 34, answer 1.
7. p. 36, answer 1, question 1.
8. pp. 37-39, questions 1-4; p. 70, answer 2.
9. p. 70, answer 2.
10. p. 71, question 3.
11. p. 72, answer 3.
12. p. 79, answer 1.
13. pp. 86-87, question 8.
14. p. 89, question 1.

remains unaffected by the natural laws.[15] God is unending darkness. Though He is formless, He creates forms.[16] God is a ripe fruit grown in the Heavens.[17] The whole universe was washed away in a deluge. A big lotus with a hundred petals was floating on the cosmic ocean. On that lotus was seated the poor, mad one.[18] Both pleasure and pain come from God.[19]

God, however, is a poor lover whose house lacks doors.[20] One who tries to entice God finds himself enticed by Him.[21] Mankind is the main prop and support of God.[22] God is the Beloved of the common people.[23] It is Time, and not God, that destroys everything.[24]

Man hardly seeks God. But God seeks him.[25] God is ever young and as black as the new cloud.[26] God is a man-child.[27] Niranjana is the Supreme God. All other gods and goddesses are His different attributes.[28]

If the devotee does not become mad for God, He does not care to reveal Himself to him.[29] Even God sheds tears for the genuine devotee.[30]

God is quantitatively constant.[31] God is kind to those who understands His kindness.[32] A man, to whom God is kind, delivers

15. p. 98, question 3.
16. p. 100, question 1.
17. p. 109, question 3.
18. p. 110, answer 1.
19. p. 116, answer 3.
20. p. 129, question 1.
21. p. 130, question 2.
22. p. 130, question 2.
23. p. 131, answer 1.
24. p. 132, answer 1.
25. p. 135, question 1.
26. p. 162, answer 4.
27. p. 175, answer 2.
28. p. 181, answer 1.
29. p. 195, answer 3.
30. p. 200, question 1.
31. p. 206, answer 1.
32. p. 210, question 1, answer 1.

razor-sharp speech. The condition of the humble maidservant becomes radically changed when the emperor marries her.[33] God is the ocean of moods.[34]

The Theory of Evidence or Pramāṇa :

Anumāna or imaginings are useless as evidence.[35] According to some men sensory evidence is the best evidence. But it is only external evidence. There is also intuitive evidence, which is very sound. An ignorant man may go on seeing a piece of writing without comprehending its meaning.[36] Fruits and flowers germinate in the roots of the trees. In the germinating stage they are not self-evident. The evidence of their existence lies in the roots. A drop of water does not constitute the evidence of the existence of the ocean. As pure consciousness God cannot be perceived by merely external sense organs.[37]

Nature and Consequences of Sahaja illumination :

That which is *Sahaja* is not affected by the senses. The *Sahaja* state is indescribable. It is pure *tejas* or Energy.[38] When one is in love with God one has no time to consider the different views which are expressed in the Vedas, or which are born of the restless mind. The lover of God cares a fig for consequences.[39]

Love of God removes the sense of difference between the best and the worst.[40] What is *human* is *Sahaja*. The *Sahaja* man lives in the *Sahaja* country. The *Sati* or chaste wife is *Sahaja* or natural to her husband. Their combined worship makes the *Sahaja* state perfect and full of *Rasa*.[41] The *Sahaja* is unaffected by the *Guṇas*. The *Sahaja* joy is the joy of the perception of non-duality. In the *Sahaja* state, the soul and the perception of the soul

33. p. 211, answer 2.
34. p. 217, question 2.
35. p. 21, question 5.
36. pp. 102-103, questions 2, 3 ; answers 2, 3.
37. p. 104, question 4, answer 4.
38. p. 11, question 1.
39. p. 27, answer 1.
40. p. 28, question 1.
41. p. 29, question 3, answer 3.

are non-dual.[42] But the *Sahaja* state does not materialise if the instincts are not flushed out. The *Sahaja* man, or the lover of God must not be affected by the senses or libido.[43] The whole country is expected to derive a good deal of benefit from the advent of the *Sahaja* man.[44] The 'best of the best' do not care for the status of the Brāhmaṇa. Their glory is immeasurable. They constantly chant Hari's Name, and float in the ocean of bliss.[45]

Brightness comes from darkness (*tamas*). Energy comes from brightness. Darkness, Truth, Brightness constitute the ascending sequential order. The glowing sun is born in the dark womb of the night. Brightness means creation. Truth means the preservation of the universe. Darkness means destruction, which is followed by creation. The *Sahaja* One is dark but effulgent.[46]

The mind is the mother of illusions. One must resist the illusions and shut one's eyes, and contemplate Supreme God present in one's heart-lotus.[47] Illusion cannot touch the *Sahaja* mind.[48] The remembrance of the previous birth comes to him who is calm, and whose mind is concentrated exclusively on God.[49] The true seeker of God thinks of himself as a poor, but honest porter, who neither remains unpaid for his labour, nor borrows.[50] Duality is an attribute of Life. Life means partial (*khaṇḍa*) time. Extinction of life leads to non-duality, because time then regains its continuity.[51] The behaviour-pattern of the *Sahaja* man is as follows: If one rebukes him, one is sure to be embraced by him. He even redeemed his enemies. He does not distinguish between friends and foes, good and evil. He cannot be purchased. Simply by

42. p. 30, answer 4.
43. p. 33, answer 2.
44. p. 62, question 2.
45. p. 81, answer 3.
46. p. 101, question 1.
47. p. 119, question 1.
48. p. 121, answer 3.
49. p. 121, answer 3.
50. p. 122, question 1, answer 1.
51. p. 133, answer 1.

pondering on the excellent qualities of the *Sahaja* man one may become highly qualified.[52] The *Sahaja* concept is unitary. It is indivisible.[53] The *Sahaja* is something beyond knowledge.[54] The *Sahaja* spiritual culture is meant for couples.[55]

The Guru and Spiritual Culture :

Worship of God is the fundamental purpose of life in this world.[56] The only method of rising above illusion and reconciling different view-points is the cultivation of the knowledge of the soul.[57] The soul is eternal and not subject to the law of re-birth.[58] The Vedānta is studied by those who regard God as pure knowledge.[59] Emphasis should be laid on both mental and spiritual worship as a means to the achievement of freedom from the fear of death.[60] Drinking of the nectar of the *guru's* name, contemplation, remembrance, and sight are essential.[61] Emphasis is laid on mental purity, good conduct, and service to the *guru* who is the eternal incarnation, the bestower of fruits, liberty, spiritual dynamism, and devotion.[62]

Illumination comes from love. Love comes from the blessing of the *guru.* From Faith comes *Bhāva* (Mood). From *Bhāva* comes *Rasa.* From *Rasa* comes *Prema* or Love. From *Prema* comes *Bhakti.* Illumination does not come from the cultivation of knowledge or the performance of rituals. It has nothing to do with such artificial concepts as *Sādhya* (Worshipable), *Sādhanā* (Worship), *Sevā* (Service), *Ādheya* (the thing to be preserved), *Ādhāra* (the container), the five moods, knowledge of duality or non-duality, and the worship of the five gods and goddesses.[63]

52. p. 151, question 1.
53. p. 208, answer 1.
54. p. 209, question 1.
55. p. 209, answer 2.
56. p. 14, answer 1.
57. p. 15, question 2, answer 2.
58. p. 17, answer 1.
59. p. 18, answer 2.
60. p. 20, answer 4.
61. p. 22, answer 2.
62. p. 22, answer 2.
63. p. 24, question 1, answer 1.

Does *Sādhana* make man capable of transcending the physical laws? Only the *Guru,* the boatman, knows the answer to all such fundamental questions. But it may be said that the physical laws are ordinarily incomprehensible.[64] Sin cannot touch a man who remembers, thinks, sees the divine image, and also chants His name. One who 'catches hold' of God gets Him.[65] The mind cannot commit any blunder after it is illumined by the *Guru's* advice.[66] Emphasis must be laid on Initiation, Name-chanting, and the Suppression of the ego.[67] The *Guru's* importance can hardly be overestimated. Without devotion for the *Guru* no one can hope to cross the river of life. When one contemplates the *Guru* one's heart-lotus blooms.[68] An unquestioning attitude is deplorable. One must determine the truth and the untruth of propositions before they are accepted or rejected.[69] The supporters of the scriptures very wrongly deplore the questioning attitude. That is why most people are wandering aimlessly in the streets and lanes of religion.[70] The *Guru* is the leader of poor but honest 'porters'.[71] The worthy *Guru* gives up worthless black magic. He repudiates *Hathayoga.* He does not shoulder any responsibility without first calculating gains and losses.[72] The new saviour is a "Conscious Man".[73] Constant spiritual activity makes the 'five lives' in the mortal body very active.[74] The Kartābhajā *Guru* must be honest and sincere. If he himself is impure, he will never be able to dispel darkness.[75]

The disciples would not be able to accept ideas and suggestions if they are not spiritually prepared to accept them. Most of the disciples are 'petty traders' unfit to do wholesale business.[76] Some *Gurus* have become abnormally rich, and have lost their in-

64. p. 30, question 1, answer 1.
65. p. 36, answer 1.
66. p. 37, answer 2.
67. p. 64, answer 4.
68. p. 72, question 1.
69. p. 112, question 1.
70. p. 113, answer 1.
71. p. 122, answer 1.
72. p. 122, question 2.
73. p. 128, answer 1.
74. p. 122, question 2.
75. p. 139, question 2.
76. p. 139, question 2.

terest in spiritual culture. These *Gurus* are surrounded by their 'agents.'[77] Christian missionaries are worthless 'market brokers', holding some packets made in England.[78] One must practise both modesty and poverty if one really wishes to realise God.[79] The importance of ecstasy is undeniable. The ecstatic moods are five, namely, the placid mood, the servile mood, the friendly mood, the filial mood, and the erotic mood.[80]

Most of the so-called ascetics are nothing but lumps of flesh, given to dreams of splendour and coitus.[81] The *Guru* is the boatman. The Kartābhajā sect is the boat.[82] The boatman does not recognise caste-distinctions.[83] Day means carnality. Night means the cessation of carnality. That is why the boatman ferries the boat to the other bank only at night.[84] The *Guru,* who is responsible for the spiritual welfare of his disciples, should not renounce the world.[85] Materialism makes a man follow the behaviour-pattern of a greedy cat. The insincere *gurus* are greedy cats.[86] But a genuine *guru* is the real 'capital' of the devotee.[87]

The State of Final Release :

Nirvāṇa is undesirable as it is indefinable.[88] Final release means the end of desires.[89] The state of final release is eternal.[90] In final release the external differences disappear.[91] What is transitory and

77. p. 148, question 1.
78. p. 19, answer 2 : para-4 : *"Kare Hāt Dālālī katakguli Hāli Dālāl, Bilāter Ek Packet Hāte Phirteche Bhārate, Kalikāl."*
79. p. 151, answer 1.
80. p. 155, question 1.
81. p. 158, question 3, answer 3.
82. p. 163, question 1, answer 1. Also, Manulal Miśra, *Bhāver Gīter Vyākhyā,* p. 11.
83. p. 172, question 1.
84. p. 185, answer 3.
85. p. 187, answer 2.
86. p. 210, question 1.
87. p. 221, answer 1.
88. p. 7, question 1.
89. pp. 7-8, question 11.
90. p. 8, question 11.
91. p. 9, answer 13.

subject to the physical laws of birth and decay, passes through ever changing phases.[92] That which is eternal signifies *Nivṛtti* or cessation.[93] The universe is uniform ; the blundering mind creates the distinctions between the objects.[94] There is no fundamental differences between one living being and another. The indivisible soul unifies them. Conditions, however, differ according to *yuga* or age.[95] Final redemption does not lie in the cultivation of the senses. The senses make a man lose his sense of direction. Final redemption lies in the extinction of the senses.[96] Redemption is the result of the contemplation of God.[97]

Preordination and Karma :

One should not try to escape preordination.[98] One cannot hope to escape preordination without the *guru's* help.[99] One may escape the wordly afflictions if one is in good company.[1] Rebirths are governed by the law of necessity.[2] Everything is connected with everything. Every man has a link with every man. Rebirth makes man capable of paying his debts.[3]

It is misery, preordained by *Karma,* which compells a man to seek God. It is useless to blame our misery on God. One should boldly face misery and remain unaffected by pleasure and pain.[4] No man shall get more than what he requires. This is the rule of universal equilibrium.[5] Why does God keep mum when there is so much misery in this world ? The scriptures cannot answer this question. Suffering makes man nestle close to God. Man suffers because he has forgotten his God. Man sufferes because he does wrong. And

92. p. 11, question 1.
93. p. 11, question 1.
94. p. 22, answer 1.
95. p. 133, answer 1.
96. p. 152, question 1, answer 1.
97. p. 161, answer 3.
98. p. 5, answer 7.
99. p. 5, answer 7.
1. p. 11, question 1.
2. p. 13, question 1, answer 2.
3. p. 68, answer 2.
4. p. 70, answer 1.
5. p. 111, question 1, answer 1.

then man makes God responsible for his suffering. It is very difficult for man to realise God. God is like dates and coconuts which are not easily available.[6] Hope is the most deadly poison.[7] The calm and the pure heart is a legacy of the previous births.[8]

The Place of the Poor in Spiritual Culture :

The poor have a better chance of redemption than the rich.[9] Spiritual love is not subject to the fluctuations of material circumstances.[10] Some people are affluent from the spiritual point of view. Some are very poor. Why does God make this difference? If a man seeks worldly happiness and seeks also redemption in worldly happiness, he cannot be a devotee. If a man seeks high position, and tries to reconcile his high position with *bhakti*, he cannot be a devotee. A good speaker is not necessarily a good devotee.[11] God has a soft corner in His heart for the poor.[12] The lowest among the lowly is really the best, for he is God.[13] It is very difficult to accept the theory that only the fortunate persons may witness the sports of Caitanya. Had it been so, the poor and the unfortunate would not have been redeemed by him. Caitanya did not see any distinction between the patricians and the plebeians, between the best and the worst.[14]

Sectarianism, Caste, and other Social Problems :

Man is like the foolish *zamindar* whose wealth is plundered by his corrupt officials.[15] One should practise *Sādhanā* in the company of one's sectarian brothers and sisters. A singular bee in a lonely bee-hive is worthless.[16] (The *Sahajiyā*) fruit became rotten. Its evil stench filled the air. The fruit was full of evil-smelling

6. pp. 113-115.
7. p. 134, question 1.
8. p. 157, answer 2.
9. p. 3, question 4; p. 63, question 3.
10. p. 26, answer 4.
11. p. 69, question 1, answer 1.
12. p. 71, question 3.
13. p. 85, question 7.
14. pp. 223-225.
15. p. 46, question 3.
16. pp. 51, answer 1 and 2, 54, answer 1.

Parakīyā juice. It was destroyed by the Company.[17] Jealousy and criticism of others are meaningless.[18] The Bengalis are always given to wrong speculations and the cultivation of sensuality. They develop their attitudes in a state of both physical and mental weakness. They must develop their own capabilities and give up the habit of depending on the foreigners.[19] The so-called guardians of the divine order are absolutely worthless.[20] Once the Company (Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism) was very rich. But its porters were extremely poor. They starved and begged, but the kings and emperors, who controlled the Company, were worthless men, given to robbery.[21] Out of the ruins of the old Company a new Company was made. There is hardly any difference between what the new Company preaches and what it practises. It does not reject the sinners. It also pacifies turbulent elements. It does not carry on business in the name of religion.[22] But the malais yet seems to be ineradicable. The world is full of both false doctrines and false preachers. Mere brokers are posing as wholesalers. But when the doomsday dawns, these elements disappear.[23] There are numerous small traders (insignificant sects). But these small traders are mostly bankrupt.[24] The following results of the Kartābhajā movement are noted : (a) the spiritual growth of the people have been assured ; (b) poor people have been spiritually enriched ; (c) Kartābhajā has made men and women conscious of some permanent values ; (d) the spiritual 'market' is full of 'commodities.'[25] Sectarian quarrels are useless. The rituals described in the Bengali almanacs are worthless.[26] Caste differences are harmful. Consideration of caste leads to spiritual bankruptcy.[27] Fault-finding and mud-throwing are serious defects.[28] Forget and forgive.[29]

17. pp. 91-94, answers 3 and 2.
18. p. 105, question 2.
19. p. 106, question 3.
20. p. 117, question 2.
21. p. 124, question 4.
22. p. 125, question 1, answer 4.
23. p. 126, question 1, answer 1.
24. p. 127, answer 2.
25. p. 138, answer 1.
26. p. 143, answer 3.
27. p. 147, answer 1.
28. p. 212, answer 1.
29. p. 213, question 1.

X

The main features of the Kartābhajā theology are stated below.

The Kartābhajā believed in non-dualism (*Advaitavāda*). They attached no importance to external differences. They had no faith in the caste-system. They did not accept the view that only the 'fortunate few' had the right to follow the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava path. They strongly objected to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava stress on asceticism and mendicancy. A basic idea was that rituals had to be attuned to the spiritual roots.[30] The most significant point is that the Kartābhajā had repudiated the *Parakiyā* theory. It is interesting to note that Jayanārāyaṇa Ghoṣāl, who was presumably a Kartābhajā, criticised the *Parakiyā* concept in *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa*.[31] The *Parakiyā* ideology of the other deviant Sahajiyā orders was described in *Bhāver Gīta* as a "stinking fruit".[32] The Kartābhajā may be described as partly Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava and partly Sahajiyā. They did not eschew *Rāgānugā* worship. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava concept of five moods was accepted by them. Some songs of *Bhāver Gīta* are echoes of *Gauranāgara songs*.[33] But the Kartābhajā strongly objected to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava stress on asceticism. On the other hand, they did not support the Sahajiyā concept of *Parakiyā* love. The Kartābhajā emphasis on *Svakiyā* relation, and the combined *Sādhanā* of the initiated couple was based on the logic of *Vyāvahāra* and *Paramārtha*. In *Vyāvahāra* or social life, the existing norms did not permit any one to have *Parakiyā* relations even in the name of the religion. *Vyāvahāra* and *Paramārtha* were held together by the law of compatibility. A male and a female *Kartābhajā* were regarded as a couple of psychic hermaphrodites, absolutely incapable of coition in the physical sense of the term.[34]

30. p. 208, question 1, answer 1.
31. *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa*, p. 220, verse 3 : *Parama Prakṛti Rādhā Sāra Ei kathā/ Keha Kahe Parakiyā Suni Lāge Vyathā//* The marriage of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā is described in this work in pp. 109-110, 220.
32. *Note*-17 *Bhāver Gīta*, pp. 91-94.
33. *Bhāver Gīta*, p. 37, question 1, and the songs in pp. 38-39 are instances.
34. *"Nārī Hijre Puruṣa Khojā Eito Lakṣaṇa", Kartābhajan Dharmer Ādi Vṛttānta*, p. 31.

The initiated husband and the wife were expected to sublimate their libido at the *Siddha stage.*

While the Kartābhajā believed that their sect had an imperishable link with Vaiṣṇavism and the Caitanya movement, Kṛṣṇa, and particularly Rādhā and her companions are scarcely mentioned in the Kartābhajā theology, as propounded in *Bhāver Gīta.* Dulālacānd and some of his followers composed quite a number of songs on the Vṛndāvana sports of Kṛṣṇa. But whether *Niranjana* of *Bhāver Gīta* is identifiable with Kṛṣṇa is a debatable point. The eclecticism of the Kartābhajā is fully expressed in the songs on Śiva, Kālī and Durgā.[35] The Kartābhajā practised *Nāmayapa* or the counting of the *Name* with each inhalation and exhalation.[36]

It should be noted here that the term *Kartā,* which may mean the Prime Mover, or the Cause of Everything, was used in the *Hevajra Tantra.*[37] The Tantrika Buddhist *Kartā,* after being thoroughly influenced by the Caitanya movement, was transformed into the *Kartābhaja* messiah towards the end of the eighteenth century. God as Cause is formless. But He is manifest in the Kartābhajā *guru.* The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, no doubt, recognised the importance of the *Guru* as Initiator or Teacher. But they did not, at least theoretically, advise the votaries to worship only the *Guru* as Supreme God. To the Kartābhajā, the *Guru* was the *Kartā,* the *Sahaja* Man of Ecstasy. A Kartābhajā poet named Dīna Mitra composed many songs on the divinity of Dulālcānd.[38] One of his songs is freely translated below :

> See ! Dulāl has presented to the world the Sahaja jem.
>
> He has performed many miracles.
>
> He has enabled us to forget the pang of birth in this world.

35. *Bhāver Gīta,* "Bhajana", pp. 233-240.
36. *"Bhāver Gīter Vyākhyā, "Vāyur Gati Nirṇaya"*, pp. 105-106.
37. *Hevajra Tantra,* Vol. 2, I. viii. 47 : *Svayaṃ hartā Svayaṃ kartā, Svayaṃ rājā Svayaṃ prabhu,* p. 30.
38. *Sangītakoṣa, "Kartabhajāsangīta"*, pp. 734-750. 45 songs are included in this collection.

He has removed the miseries of the living beings.

He has made us capable of relishing the indescribable joy of fusion with the Absolute, which is above the *Guṇas*.

This is indeed a wonderful achievement.

Even Brahma, Viṣṇu, Indra and other gods have so far failed to effect this fusion.

In this dark *Kali*-age Dulāl has caused the Golden Age to dawn over mankind.

In fact Dulāl has revealed His own worship. He has assumed the form of Man.

He thus worships Himself. His ideas are far above the Vedas and the scriptures.

Mitra says: Only those who think of Him are the blessed ones.[39]

Suniti Kumar Chatterjee thought that the Kartābhajā was "a very late form of nondescript extra-Brahmanical sect."[40] The extra-Brahmanical nature of the Kartābhajā movement attracted the ridicule of the Brahmanical elements even in the nineteenth century. The Jaganmohanī Sect of Sylhet was also a 'guru-worshipping' sect. But the Brāhmaṇas of West Bengal had nothing to say about that sect in far Sylhet. Ghoshpārā was inconveniently near Calcutta and Navadvīpa. So the Brāhmaṇas of these places began to pooh-pooh the deification of the Ghoshpāra *gurus*.

Dāśarathī Rāya (1806-1857), the singer of the *Pāncālīs*, and a quarrelsome champion of the conservative causes, wrote the following doggerel on the Kartābhajā *guru*:[41]

39. Ibid., last song in p. 736.
40. "Buddhist Survivals in Bengal", in *Select Writings*, p. 43.
41. *Dāśarathī Rāyer Pāncālī*, p. 665.

The *Kartā* of the Kartābhaja is like

a Dog in the wretched hut wherein the paddy-grinder is kept ;

a Ghost in the crematorium ;

a *Mārid* in the Muhammadan grave-yard ;

a Spook in a field strewn with rotten carcasses of cows ;

a Female Goblin in a place full of rubbish and dung ;

a Cowherd in a field ;

a Nurse in a room where a woman has given birth to a baby ;

a Calf in a pen full of rams and ewes.

Brahmanical criticism of the sect centred round the free mixing of male and female votaries during the *Vaithak* congregations. It was believed that the free mixing and ecstasy led to sexual promiscuity.[42] A journalist reported that most of the women who attended the Kartābhajā fair in March were prostitutes. He found the Kartābhaja Pope surrounded by fawning young women.[43] According to J. N. Bhattacharya, the Kartābhajā "bailiffs" played the part of Kṛṣṇa in the company of the female votaries.[44]

So severe was the condemnation of the Kartābhajā *Guru* worship that a Kartābhajā spokesman had to say that his sect was not really a *guru*-worshipping sect. According to him the Kartābhaja *guru* "is merely a teacher and has no right to exact any divine homage from his Varatis."[45]

42. *Bhāratavarṣīyā Upāsaka Saṃpradāya.*
43. Benoy Ghosh, *Sāmayik Patre Bānglār Samājcitra,* Vol. 4, pp. 698-99.
44. *Hindu Castes and Sects,* op. cit., pp. 383 f.
45. Opinion quoted by J. H. E. Garett, *Bengal District Gazetteers,* Nadia, p. 49.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, too, grew extremely jealous of the tremendous success of the Ghoshpārā centre. In 1835 or thereabouts, some of them organised a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava fair at an adjoining village named Kule, which was described as the *Śrīpāta* of Devānanda, who was an influential *Mahānta* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas also propagated the myth that Aulcand was actually a fake Fakir, who had impersonated Pratapcānd, the Mahārāja of Burdwan, in about 1785, and who somehow escaped the clutches of the police, and reappeared as Satyanātha, and founded the Kartābhajā sect.[46]

The Christian missionaries were considerably intrigued by the remarkable mass-base of the Kartābhajā order. A Presbyterian Church was founded in Ghoshpārā.[47] "A considerable number of those who first received the Gospel in Jessore were in a measure prepared to do so by an acquaintance with the religionists of Ghoshpara."[48] The Church Missionary Society converted into Christianity five hundred Kartābhajās of Kṛṣṇanagar in 1838.[49]

The Kartābhajā represented the orthodox trend in the heterodox Sahajiyā movement. In *Bhāver Gīta* there is no unmistakable reference to the *guru's* right to emulate the sports of Kṛṣṇa. Some of the *Kartās,* however, might have tried to intensify the *bhakti* of their disciples by simple sleight-of-hand :

> "Just before *vaithak* at night the Kartā pours oil into the shell of his *hukkā* (hubble-bubble). During the *Vaithak* the lamps are suddenly extinguished. The Kartā now pours from the *hukkā*-shell oil into the lamps, with a view to showing off his miraculous powers. The widows think that the transformation of water into oil is a very genuine miracle. They immediately roll on the ground in ungovernable ecstasy.[50]

46. These theories are stated by Radhakanta Gangopadhyaya in *Kuler Pat O Ghospara,* intro. p. 3, text, pp. 34-36.
47. J. Long, "The Banks of the Bhāgirathi", *Select Papers,* p. 59.
48. Ibid., p. 68, fn.
49. KDI, Vol. 2, pp. 25-26.
50. *Dāśurathī Rāyer Pāncālī,* p. 669.

Some Kartābhajās, however, did not appreciate this type of free mixing and ecstasy. They founded a rival order in Basberia in Hooghly district. This was known as the Rāmavallabhī sect, the founder of which was Rāmavallabha. Rāmavallabha was worshipped as the incarnation of Śiva. His followers recited the *Gitā,* the *Koran,* and the *Bible.* They worshipped Absolute Truth and violated caste restrictions. The conservative Brāhmaṇas spread the canard that the Rāmavallabhis held secret orgies.[51]

Since the Kartābhajā discarded the external symbols of their faith, and eschewed the scatalogical rituals of the Bauls, since they had accepted the *Svakīyā* theory, the radical Baul and Āul elements came out of the order, and founded at least three deviant orders, namely, the Sāhebdhani order, the Sahaja-Kartābhajā order, and the Khusīviśvāsī order. The last order was founded by a Muhammadan named Khusī Viśvās.[52]

Men and women, who practised different modes of worship could in pursuit of *Paramārtha,* become members of both the Baul and the Kartābhajā sects.[53] Rammohun Ray might have been influenced by this liberal view. The Brāhma Samāja, established on August 20, 1828, granted admittance to "all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction.....for the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable, and Immutable Being."[54]

51. *Bhāratavarṣīya Upāsaka Sampradāya,* p. 128.

52. Ibid., pp. 129-130. See, Sudhīr Cakravartī, *Sāhebdhanī Sampradāya: Tāder Gān.* (Calcutta, 1985).

53. *Kartābhajan Dharmer Ādi Vrttānta,* pp. 73-80.

54. S. D. Collect, *The Life and Letters of Rammohun Ray,* ed. D. K. Biswas and P. C. Ganguli, p. 471, the 'trust deed' of the Brāhma Samaj.

CHAPTER XXI

SOME ASPECTS OF VAIṢṆAVISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I

It is believed that in Bengal rational judgment gained ascendancy during the nineteenth century. Even religion was deeply influenced by rational thinking. Rammohun Ray initiated the Brāhma Samāj movement with a view to levelling the angularities of Hinduism. The 'Young Bengal', educated in the Hindu College of Calcutta, initially preached iconoclasm. Social and religious reformation became the creed of a good number of Bengalis educated in the institutions set up by the British. Both urban culture and mass media developed throughout Bengal. The century also witnessed the development of new forms of administration and economic production. The purpose of the present survey is to inquire into the response of Vaiṣṇavism to the challenge of modern times.

It should be noted that the position of Vaiṣṇavism was almost unassailable. It had a vast social base. W. Ward wrote in 1811 :"... two persons in ten, of the whole Hindoo population of Bengal are supposed to be followers of Choitunyu."[1] In 1820 Walter Hamilton described Vaiṣṇavism as one of the principle religions of Bengal.[2] Bholanauth Chunder wrote in 1869 : "One fifth of the population of Bengal are now followers of Chaitanya. Nearly all of the opulent families of Calcutta belong to this sect."[3] The census figures corroborate these statements. According to the census of 1881, 5,68,052 people of Bengal belonged to the Vaiṣṇava caste.[4] In the Census of 1901, however, the number computed was 3,91,392.[5] Ward noted the remarkable opulence and social importance of the Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins. They were patronised by many rich landlords. Kṛṣṇarām Basu, a Kāyastha landlord, bore

1. Ward, *Account*, Vol. 3, p. 262
2. Hamilton, *Description of Hindustan*, Vol. 1, p. 208
3. B.N.Chunder, *The Travels of a Hindoo*, Vol, 1,pp. 35-36
4. J. A. Bourdillon, *Report of the Census of Bengal*, 1881, Vol. I, p. 134, Table 33
5. E.A.Gait, *Census of India*, 1901, Vol. VI B, Provincial Table III, pp. 62-122.

the huge expense of the construction of the chariot of Māhesh. It amounted to "four or five thousand rupees."[1] Nearly all prostitutes of the growing Calcutta metropolis professed "the religion of Choitunyu before their death, that they may be intitled to some sort of funeral rites."[2] A large number of people became *Bairagis* (Vaiṣṇava mendicants) to avoid worldly trouble, unpleasant connections and debts. Some became mendicants "for the sake of gratifying some unlawful passion." Some people became Vaiṣṇava beggars to evade stringent caste rules. "The poor farmer's little all, when he is unfortunate in his harvest, is sold up by the corn merchants, and he is turned upon the unfeeling world, to beg his bread as a religious mendicant, or perish."[3] Rev. Lal Bihari De describes how intolerable poverty compelled a peasant woman of Burdwan to become a *bostumi* (Female Mendicant.)[4]

Simplicity was the strength of Vaiṣṇavism. Its rituals had been considerably simplified by Siddha Kṛṣṇadāsa and his disciples. The theory and practice of *bhakti* had been accepted even by the caste-conscious Brāhmaṇas. Caitanya was respected as a great saint by all castes mainly because he had renounced the world. Vaiṣṇavism had also strengthened the eclectic ideals by which it was itself very deeply influenced. Vaiṣṇavism was quite compatible with polytheistic worship. But the chief reason behind its growing popularity was its liberal attitude towards caste.

The eclectic tendency resulted in the construction of hundreds of Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva-Śākta temples by people belonging to both high and low castes. The Śāktas had been affected by the soft, mellow spirit of Vaiṣṇavism and its poetry. It has already been pointed out that leading Śākta poets like Rāmprasād Sen and Kamalākānta Bhattācārya preached Kāḷi-Kṛṣṇa non-duality in their simple, passion-laden songs. This idea of non-duality was, however, disliked by the orthodox Vaiṣṇavas.[5] But the songs of Rāmprasād showed which way the wind was blowing. Rāmprasād's contempo-

1. Ward, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 535. Kṛṣṇarām also gave the Māhesa priests an allowance of six rupees per day.
2. Ward, op. cit. Vol-3, p. 262
3. Ibid. pp. 433-37 ; Vol. 4, p. 80.
4. De, *Bengal Peasant Life* ch. XXXIV, pp. 175-76.
5. Ward records a Śākta-Vaiṣṇava duel of banters. *Account*, Vol. 4, pp. 198-200. Very often the language of the sectarian quarrel was unprintable. Vide. Nārāyaṇa Cattarāja Guṇanidhi, *Kalikutuhala* (published in B.S. 1260, A.D.1853), pp. 72-78, "Atha Śākta-Vaiṣṇava Kalaha"

rary, Bhāratacandra Rāyaguṇākara, the celebrated court-poet of Kṛṣṇanagar, also wrote some sophisticated songs on the loves of Kṛṣṇa, though *Annadāmangala,* his masterpiece, deals with the Durgā legend.[2]

II

During the eighteenth century Tantra was popular among a powerful section of the Bengali *zamindars.* Sizable segments of the upper castes also observed Tántrika *Kulācāra.*[3] The steady growth of the Calcutta metropolis as the city of the Bengali new rich, and the tragic waning of the late mediaeval estates after the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793, resulted in the pauperisation of the Kālī-worshipping Rājās, who once retained bands of club-wielding body-guards recruited from the scheduled castes. These people associated plunder and murder with Kālī worship. Professional robbers worshipped Kālī. But the new rich of Calcutta very soon developed a different way of life. They were staunch supporters of British 'Law and Order' from which they derived immense benefit. Most of them professed or patronised Vaiṣṇavism. One may say that the popularity of Vaiṣṇavism towards the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth was an indirect effect of the consolidation of British power in Bengal, which gradually put an end to plunder and murder in the name of religion. All old *zamindárs,* however, did not give up their Śākta faith. The Rājās of Kṛṣṇanagar, for instance, were unflinching Śāktas, though they did not disrespect the Vaiṣṇavas. The Navadvīpa gosvāmīns had very little influence over them. Siddha Caitanyadāsa of Navadvīpa once publicly described a Kṛṣṇanagar Rājā as an incarnation of Rāvana, thereby implying that Caitanya was the incarnation of Rāma[4]. But almost all among the new rich of the latter half of the eighteenth century were Vaiṣṇavas. Their pre-eminent representatives were Gangānārāyaṇa Simha, the Rājās of Cossimbazar, Mahārājā Nandakumár, the Rājās of Postā, and the Sobhābazar Rājās. Rājá Sukhamaya Rāyabāhadur of Postā spent huge sums during one of his pilgrimages to Puri.[5] Lālā Bābu, a very rich

2. These songs are included in *Vidyāsundara Kāvya*
3. Dīnseh Chandra Bhattācārya, *Kaviranjan Rāmaprasāda Sena,* in Sāhitya-sādhaka Caritamālā Vol IX. P. 17.
4. *Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana,* Vol. 2. pp. 87-88.
5. Benimadhav Chatterji, *A Short Sketch of Maharaja Sukhmoy Roy Bahadur,* Calcutta,1910, pp. 5-6; also, appendix-c. Sukhmoy "left a sum of Rs.

zamindār, ultimately became a mendicant (*bhekadhārī*) disciple of Duhkhī Kṛṣṇadāsa II of Vṛndāvana. The *Bābu* died in far Vṛndāvana on May 14, 1820, at the age of forty-four.[1] Among the new rich of Calcutta and its neighbourhood, the following either professed Vaiṣṇavism, or patronised the Vaiṣṇavas :

Govindrum Mitra, the notorious 'Black Zamindar' of Calcutta.[2]

The millionaire Rājās of Shobhābazar.[3]

Muttiloll Mullick of Pāthuriāghātā.[4]

Jayanārayaṇa Ghosāla of Bhukailāsh.[5]

The Tagore families of Pāthuriāghātā and Jorāsānko.[6]

The majority of the Suvarṇavaṇik landlords of Calcutta.[7]

Most of the temples of Calcutta, built by the new rich, were Vaiṣṇava temples. The Suvarṇavaṇik millionaire Matilāl Śīl and the trustees of his vast estate, for instance, built eight Vaiṣṇava temples in Calcutta.[8]

1,555/- to meet the expenses for the entertainment of strangers at this Koonjah (meaning, Bower) at Brindaban Dham and another sum of Rs. 15,000 for expenses relating to the worship of Gopaljeeoo at Sutobadi", p. 7

1. The news of Lālā Bābu's death in Vṛndāvana was published in the *Samācāradarpaṇa* of June 17, 1820.
2. Vide, *An Account of the Late Govindrum Mitter*, Vol. CCXIX of India Office Library Tracts, Calcutta National Press, 1869; B. V. Roy, 'The Black Zamindar of Calcutta" *Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, Independence Commemoration Number, 1947, pp. 12-18. Govindaram built a huge, nine-pinnacled temple with a lofty cupolla which was totally destroyed by tht great cyclone of 1737. T. N. Daniell drew a coloured sketch of the temple.
3. N. N. Ghose, *Memoirs of Maharaja Nubkissen Bahadur*, Chs. 1, 2 and 3.
4. Matilal Mallik was a disciple of some gosvāmin of the Nityānanda branch. He showered gifts on the followers of Nityānanda. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāya, *Samvādpatre Sekāler Kathā*, (1937 ed.), Vol. 1, p. 264
5. Author of *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa*, and, in all probability, a disciple of the Kartābhajā pope, Dulālcānd. Jayanārāyāṇa wrote in Sanskrit prose *Vaiṣṇavārcaṇacandrikā*, a work on rituals, which is fully quoted in *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa*, pp. 232-235. Some parts of *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa* were written with the assistance of Mangala Dāsa, a Vaiṣṇava, and Mādhava Paṇḍita, a Sanskrit scholar, who also knew Vrajabhākhā. *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa* p. 59, verses 7-12
6. The Tagore families worshipped the Sāligrāma stone. Nagendranāth Basu, Byomakeśa Mustafi, *Vanger Jātīya Itihās, Brāhmaṇa Kāṇḍa*, Vol. 3, part 6, pp. 319-320; the religion of Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, pp. 349-352.
7. 45 biographies in *Suvarṇavaṇik Kathā O Kirti*, 3 Vols. 23 were enthusiastic Vaiṣṇavas.
8. Benoy Ghosh, *Kalikātā Saharer Itivṛtta*, p. 673

The nine-towered temple of Rādhākānta, located in Tollyganj, was built by the local Maṇḍal *zamindārs* in 1809. Here it should be noted that a big, brilliantly decorated temple of Syāmasundara was built in Bāhāru village in 1821-1825. The temple was decorated with excellent mural paintings of the 'sports' of Caitanya by one Durgārām Bhāskar. Bāhāru village is in south 24-Parganas.

III

The Vaiṣṇavas were aware of the challenges thrown by the evolving modern society in the urban centres. The pace of life had grown faster than before. The Vaiṣṇavas did not mix with the reformers. They "kept to the right" with meticulous care. Jadunath Sarkar is of opinion that Vaiṣṇavism liberalised the outlook of the Bengali Hindus.[1] Tāntrika 'leftism' was disciplined. Women grew socially conscious and literate. But despite Vaiṣṇavism, hundreds of widows were burnt in Bengal. Infants were thrown into the surging waves of Gangāsāgar, despite the Vaiṣṇava adoration of Kṛṣṇa, the divine infant. Drunkenness and immoralities grew rampant. The Vaiṣṇavas miserably failed to promote the ethical view. When they saw that the new rich had been able to establish their social prominence on a solid basis, they began to nestle close to them. The low caste *zamindārs* were trying to elevate their caste status by vigorously courting the favour of the Brāhmaṇa *Paṇḍītas* and priests. As rival of the *Paṇḍītas* and the priests, the Vaiṣṇavas were not in a position to champion the causes of social and religious reform. They grew conservative because the new rich, as a class, were conservative. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism became a distinct facet of Hindu orthodoxy.

Many low-caste rich *zamindārs* were attracted by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-Brāhmaṇa equation. Since the gosvāmins considered themselves equal to the Brāhmaṇas, and since they preached the theory that a practising Vaiṣṇava was even superior to a Brāhmaṇa, the low caste *zamindārs* found it possible to elevate their social position by professing Vaiṣṇavism.

The millionaire Matilāl Śil (1792-1854) requested the leading members of the *Dharmasabhā*, the principal Brāhmaṇical organisation of Calcutta, to consider the Vaiṣṇava's claim to social superiority, irrespective of his caste. The Brāhmaṇa *Paṇḍitas* of the *Dharma-*

1. *History of Bengal*, Vol. 2, p. 221.

sabhā composed a work entitled *Viprabhakticandrikā*, five hundred copies of which were published by Śil in 1832.[1] The authors of this work concluded that a Brāhmaṇa was decidedly nobler than a Śūdra-Vaiṣṇava. Though Matilāl Śīl was a Vaiṣṇava, he accepted the conclusion, because he was a patron of the Brāhmaṇas, too. But Brāhmanical superiority was boldly challenged by another Suvarṇavaṇik landlord named Bhairava Candra Datta. He published a work entitled *Śṛī Śṛī Vaiṣṇavabhaktikaumudī*,[2] which was printed in a press named "Pāṣaṇḍadalana" (Suppression of the Unbelievers), and published in 1832. The work flatly rejected the Brāhmaṇical claim to the highest social status, and stated the various theories of the social and sacerdotal pre-eminence of the Vaiṣṇavas irrespective of caste.

IV

The Vaiṣṇava fairs and festivals were extremely popular in the nineteenth century. In 1802 the Gaurānga fair in Navadvīpa was a famous event. Rām Rām Basu, one of the earliest writers of Bengali prose, described the fair in *Lipimālā*.[3] The people did not have to observe caste rules as long as they were present in the fair. Vaiṣṇava festivals were regularly held in Calcutta and the districts.[4] The pilgrimage to Puri was so popular that the Jagannātha temple of Puri earned Rs. 12,87,790/- between 1810 and 1831. The annual income of the temple was Rs. 51,101/-.[5] The *Janmāstamī* procession of Dacca, financed mainly by the local Śānkhavaṇik merchants, and the *Rāsa* fair of Śāntipur were magnificent affairs, in which the local Vaiṣṇavas exhibited their immense wealth in the form of gold and silver reserves. In 1834 the government unexpectedly imposed a ban on Vaiṣṇava processions in Calcutta. It was lifted in 1835, thanks to the intervention of Rādhā-

1. Narendranāth Lāhā, *Suvarṇavaṇik Kathā O Kīrti*, Vol. 1, pp. 43-50. The *Dharma Sabhā* was founded in January 1830. Bhavānīcaraṇ Bandyopādhāya (1787-1848) was its secretary. Its journal was *Samācāracandrikā*.
2. *Suvarnavaṇik Kathā a Kīrti*, Vol. I, pp. 50-64.
3. *Lipimālā* (Serampore, 1802), pp. 110-132.
4. Vide, *Samvādpatra Sekāler Kathā*, Vol. 1, pp. 256, 225, 257, Vol. 2: pp. 371, 372, 373 for descriptions of the Vaiṣṇava festivals of Māhesh, Serampore Pānihāti, Ulā and Calcutta. See also Benoy Ghosh, *Sāmayika Patre Bānglār Samājacitra*, Vol. 4, pp. 702-704, for a description of the *Rāsa* fair at Harināhbi (24-Parganas) a centre of Brāhmanical culture.
5. *Samvādpatre Sekāler Kathā*, Vol. 2, pp. 407-408

kānta Deb (1784-1867) of Sobhābazar, who was a distinguished leader of the conservative Bengalis.[1] Some Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins, however, did not mend their old ways. At least some of them practised *jus primae noctis* in Midnapur and Balāsore. Gradually the barbarity disappeared. Ultimately the Midnapur bridegrooms had to seek merely the permission of the Vaiṣṇava *Kulagurus* before they could consummate their marriage. The permission was given on payment of a fee.[2] In Calcutta the Vaiṣṇava gosvāmins tried very hard to initiate substantial landlords. They often faced trouble when they paid visits to aristocratic seraglios.[3] Utterly materialistic and given to dissipation, some of the new rich simply tortured the prowling gosvāmins.[4] The majority of the Vaiṣṇava mendicants preferred seclusion. They lived in *Ākhḍās* or monasteries. These were set up throughout Bengal. The well-known of them were located in Simuliyā, Navadvīpa (Nadiā), Kālnā (Burdwan), Jiāganj (Murshidābād), Kenduli and Maynādol (Birbhum), Rāmkeli and Gayeshpur (Malda), and Kambuliyātolā (Calcutta).[5] Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism had still no central organisation. For a long time some sort of control over the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas was exercised by the leading *Ākhḍās* of Navadvīpa and Kālnā. Heresy often raised its head. The *Spaṣtadāyakas,* for instance, respected the tenets of the Caitanya cult, but repudiated the authority of the *gurus.* In the *Spaṣtadāyaka* monasteries monks and nuns lived in separate quarters. It was believed that heresy in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order was a result of "the introduction of knowledge, liberal sentiments, and Christian truth into the community".[6]

The Vaiṣṇava tradition was kept alive by secular organisations of householding Vaiṣṇavas and Hindus who worshipped the five divinities. Behālā in South Calcutta had a *Haribhaktīpradāyinī Sabhā* in 1852 ; this was perhaps the earliest association of the lay Vaiṣṇavas of Calcutta.[7] *Śṛī Caitanya Sabhā* was organised in Kolutolā, Central Calcutta in 1861.[8]

1. Ibid, Vol. 2, News Item of September 1835, pp. 383-384.
2. *Hutom Payāncār Naksā* (ed. Bandyopadhyaya and Das), pp. 41-45
3. *Samvād Patre Sekāler Kathā,* Vol. 1, pp. 124-126
4. *Hutom Payāncār Naksā,* pp. 32-34,41,45-46.
5. *Gauḍila Vaiṣṇava Jivana,* Vol. 2, pp. 133,205-206
6. Lal Bihari De's opinion in *Calcutta Review* Vol. XV, 1851, p. 194.
7. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāya, *Bānglā Sāmayika Patra,* Vol. 1, p. 141. The *Sabhā* published a journal named *Sāmvātsarika Samvādapatra* in 1856.
8. Ibid, p. 172. The journal of the *Sabhā* was named *Śṛī Caitanyakīrti-kaumudī Patrikā.*

In 1898 or thereabouts Calcutta and the suburban areas had as many as twenty-nine *Harisabhās* or associations with a pronounced Vaiṣṇava sympathy. These associations constituted a powerful Vaiṣṇava milieu in urban-industrial surroundings. The main reason behind the multiplication of these associations in 1898 was the outbreak of bubonic plague in Calcutta in an epidemic form. It was believed that the devastating plague would disappear if the citizens chanted the names of Hari and Caitanya *Mahāprabhu*. Even Muhammadans and Christians sang *Kīrtana*.[1] The *Harisabhās* strengthened Vaiṣṇavism as a Brāhmanical cult. The plague revealed the fact that the urban culture of Calcutta had an imperishable link with what a sociologist describes as "the traditional matrix of sacred culture." In Calcutta, (and, to a considerable extent, in the city of Madras), the traditional cultural media "not only continue to survive but have also been incorporated in novel ways into an emerging popular and classical culture. Much of the urban popular culture is seen as an extension of the path of devotion (*bhaktimārga*), more easily accessible to modern man than the paths of ritual observance (*Karmamārga*), or the path of sacred knowledge (*Jnānamārga*)".[2]

V

The Vaiṣṇavas felt the need of disseminating their views on a wide scale. The Vaiṣṇava biographies *Narottamavilāsa* and *Jagadīśacaritravijaya* were published by Bengali publishers in 1815. The publication of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava classics, such as CCM, *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*, and *Haribhaktivilāsa* was advertised in the *Samācāradarpaṇa* between 1818 and 1829.[3] Upendranath Mitra's Bengali translation of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* was published in 1816. At about the same time Jayanārāyaṇa Ghosála's *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa*, too, was published.

Later the responsibility for publishing Vaiṣṇava and Sahajiyā manuscripts was shouldered by a group of printers and publishers of north Calcutta who were known as 'Batatalā' publishers. Their

1. The devotional songs sung by the members of these clubs are collected in *Sangitakoṣa*, pp. 751-800. See also Rāmadāsa Bābāji, *Caritasudhā*, Vol. 2, pp. 171-174
2. Milton Singer, "The Great Tradition of Hinduism in the City of Madras", *Anthropology of Folk Religion*, ed. Charles Leslie, p. 158.
3. *Samvādpatre Sekāler Kathā*, Vol. 1, pp. 75-76,90-91.

printing presses were set up in Upper Chitpore Road, Nimu Gosvāmi Lane (Āhirītolā), and Sobhābazar, Jaya Mitra Street and Grey Street. The Batatalā publishers were keenly aware of the great demand for Vaiṣṇava books in the rural areas. They printed a good number of original works and translations of the Vaiṣṇava classics on cheap paper, using very bad types and apocryphal manuscripts. The Batatalā products were notoriously brittle and unauthentic. But it was the only place where all sorts of Vaiṣṇava books were printed and published mainly for the use of the villagers. The Batatalā publishers also brought out numerous cheap editions of Sahajiyā works. This fact was an indication of the popularity of Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇavism. The principal publisher of Sahajiyā works was Benīmadhav De of Upper Chitpore Road. He published numerous Sahajiyā works in the form of printed manuscripts. Between 1815 and 1899, nearly fifty important Vaiṣṇava works were published in Calcutta. Most of these works were written in Bengali verse and prose. This shows that the Vaiṣṇavas grew conscious of the value of publicity through the press.

The products of Batatala failed to satisfy the demands of the sophisticated Vaiṣṇavas. In 1845 Muktārāma Vidyāvāgīśa edited, printed and published at his own cost an authentic edition of Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmin's *Haribhaktivīlāsa*. In 1854 Rajendralala Mitra edited Karṇapūra's *Caitanyacandrodaya* with a very interesting introduction. Later on the task of bringing out reliable editions of the Vṛndāvana texts and the Vaiṣṇava biographies and *Padāvalīs* was most brilliantly fulfilled by Rāmanārāyaṇa Vidyāratna of Murshidabad. He was associated with a project of Vaiṣṇava publications which was financed by Rādhāramaṇa Ghoṣa, Bhágavatabhūṣaṇa, who was the private secretary to the King of Tripura State. Rādhāramaṇa set up a press in Baharampur which was named Rādhāramaṇa Press, and from which an authentic edition of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* with four Sanskrit commentaries and Bengali translation was brought out at the cost of nearly Rs. 1,000,000/-. The edition was prepared for private circulation.

VI

The earliest Vaiṣṇava weekly was *Bhāgavatasamācāra* which was edited by Brajamohan Cakravarti in 1831.[1] Another contemporary

1. *Samvadpatre Sekaler Kathā*, Vol. 2, p. 124

Vaiṣṇava weekly was *Bhaktisūcaka* (1835). Between 1846 and 1861 at least four other Vaiṣṇava or semi-Vaiṣṇava journals were published. These were *Nityadharmānuranjikā* (1846), *Sāmvatsarikasamvādapatra* (1856) *Advaitatattvapradarśaka Patrikā* (1856) and *Śrī Caitanyakīrtikaumudī Patrikā* (1861).[1]

Vaiṣṇava journalism as well as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava organisation in Bengal really became meaningful under the guidance of a dynamic Vaiṣṇava Deputy Magistrate named Kedarnāth Datta, Bhaktivinoda (1838-1914). He was originally a member of the Kartābhajā sect. Later he severed his link with the Kartābhajā, and became a disciple of Bipinbihārī Gosvāmin of Bāghnāpārā.[2] In his youth he came into close contact with Dvijendranāth Tagore (1840-1926), eldest son of Devendranāth Tagore. With Dvijendranāth, Kedārnāth assiduously studied Western Philosophy and History.[3] Later he initiated the study of comparative philosophy in the light of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology. When he was a Deputy Magistate in Puri, Kedārnāth caused the incarceration of a man named Visakisan, who was the leader of the heretical *Ativaḍi* sect, on the plea that the man was inciting the peasants to revolt against British rule.[4] Kedārnāth first published the famous Vaiṣṇava journal, *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, in 1884.[5] In 1885 he founded a Vaiṣṇava society named Vaiṣṇava Sabha, and also set up the Depository Press in 181, Māniktalā Street, Calcutta. The Vaiṣṇava Sabhā appointed three Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava preachers named Bipinbihārī Gosvāmī, Mahendranāth Gosvāmī and Harigopāl Gosvāmī. They were to work in the districts of West Bengal.[6]

The Vaiṣṇavas of Dacca and Balasore published in 1885 two journals, titled, respectively, *Ratnākara*, and *Śrī Haribhaktipradāyinī*.[7] Three other short-lived Vaiṣṇava journals appeared in Calcutta in the same year ; these were *Vaiṣṇava, Navamanjarī*, and *Tattvamanjarī*.[8] In 1894 one Manmathanath Mitra organised in Burdwan town a

1. Brajendranath Bandyopadhyaya, *Bangla Samayika Patra*, Vol. 1, pp. 54, 86, 141,148, 172
2. *Gaudiya Vaisnava Jivana*, Vol. 2, pp. 288-89
3. *Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakurer Svalikhita Jivani* pp. 112-14
4. *Sajjanatoṣaṇi*, 1896, Vol. 8, pp. 161-167, 207, 229
5. Kedārnāth also published a Vaiṣṇava work in Urdu. Its title was *Bāḷid-i-Registry*.
6. *Sajjanatoṣaṇi*, 1885, Vo. 2, p. 3
7. Ibid, p. 217
8. Ibid, p. 217

Vaiṣṇava association called *Vardhamāna Vaiṣṇavadharma Uddīpanī Sabhā*.[1] Tripura, too, had a Vaiṣṇava club known as *Āgartalā Haribhaktipradāyinī Sabhā* (1895).[2] This association was organised by King Vīracandra Māṇikya.

A similar association of Dakṣiṇakhaṇḍa, Murshidabad, organised a popular *Mahotsava* or grand festival in 1884.[3] A Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava named Premānanda Bhāratī (originally named Surendranāth Mukhopādhyāya, 1857-1914) preached Vaiṣṇavism in Europe and the U.S.A.[4] A *Caītanyasamāja* was established in the U.S.A. in about 1897 by an American convert named Professor Osman.[5]

In about 1899 the othodox Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas of Calcutta established a new Vaiṣṇava society in Calcutta which was named *Gaurāngasamāja*.[6] A Vaiṣṇava journal named *Vaiṣṇavapratibhā* appeared in Calcutta in 1899-1900.[7]

Gaurāngasamāja, mentioned above, was founded by Śiśirkumār Ghoṣe (1840-1911), an eminent journalist of Calcutta, and a devout Vaiṣṇava. He created a stir in the intellectual circles by publishing the first volume of *Amiyanimāicarita* in 1892. With the help of Kedārnāth Datta and Rādhikānāth Gosvāmī, Śiśirkumār published the fortnightly journal, *Śrī Śrī Viṣṇupriyā Patrikā* on 1 Caitra, of Caitanya era 405 (1890). It was edited by Kedārnāth Datta and Rādhikānāth Gosvāmī. Later the journal became a monthly. It was afterwards amalgamated with the weekly *Ānandabāzār Patrikā*. In 1901 *Śrī Śrī Gauraviṣṇupriyā Patrikā* was published as the journal of the *Gaurāngasamāja*. Kedārnāth Datta severed his link with *Śrī Śrī Viṣṇupriyā Ānandabazar Patrikā* in 1899 on the ground that the journal was indulging in un-Vaiṣṇava 'confabulation' (*Prajalpa*) by mixing Vaiṣṇavism with the news of secular developments.[8]

1. Ibid., Vol. 6, 1894, pp. 74-75
2. Ibid., Vol. 7, 1895, pp. 289-291
3. Ibid., Vol. 8, 1896, pp. 111-113
4. Rāmadāsa Babaji, *Caritasudhā,* Vol. 1, pp. 270-298: Premānanda Bhāratī was a friend of Rādhāramaṇa Caraṇa Dāsa Deva, and author of *Śrikṛṣṇa* (New York, 1904).
5. *Sajjanatoṣaṇi,* 1897, Vol. 9, p. 3
6. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāya, *Śiśir Kumār Ghose,* Sāhitya Sādhaka Caritamālā-86, p. 49.
7. *Sajjanatoṣaṇi,* Vol. 12, 1900-1901, p. 1.
8. *Sajjanatoṣaṇi,* August, 1899, pp. 28-29

A society named *Gauḍeśvara Vaiṣṇava* was established in Vṛndāvana in 1900-1901. Its journal was also named *Gauḍeśvara.*[1] Kedārnāth Datta was one of those Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who thought that Māyāpur was the Navadvīpa of the sixteenth century. In 1894 he organised a society with a view to establishing the primacy of Māyāpur over the present town of Navadvīpa.[2] His hypothesis was bitterly criticised by the leading citizens of Navadvīpa town who were led by Kānticandra Rādī.[3]

The Bengali Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana established an association in 1892 or thereabouts, which was called *Śrīcaitanyamatavodhinī Sabhā.* Its journal was called *Śrīcaitanyamatavodhinī.* In the fourth issue of this journal, an article entitled "Vivādarahasya" contained a scurrilous attack on Viṣṇupriyā Devī. It also described Karṇapūra's hagiography as an apocryphal work. These views were condemned in *Sajjanatoṣaṇi.*[4] Another Vṛndāvana society named *Vaiṣṇavadharma-pracārinī Sabhā* awarded titles to thirty-four outstanding Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, including Śiśirkumar Ghose.[5]

VII

The leading Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas had quite different political opinions. Śiśirkumār Ghoṣe was renowned for his long and bitter struggles against the indigo-planters and tyrannical bureaucrats. Śiśirkumār used the *Amritabazar Patrika* in defence of the rights of his countrymen. He believed that the basic interests of the Indians and the Englishmen were never identical. "We are we and they are they" he said.[6] Kedarnāth Datta, on the other hand, openly preached loyalty to the *Rāj* in *Sajjanatoṣaṇī.*[7] He criticised secularism and Comte's positivism as worthless doctrines.[8] He believed that the British and the Bengalis were brothers because they belonged to the Aryan race.[9] This shows that Datta was deeply

1. Ibid., Vol. 12, 1900-1901, p. 1
2. Ibid.,Vol. 5, 1893-94, No. 1: notice of the association was published in it.
3. The dissentient opinions are published in Kānti Candra Rādī's *Śrī Śrī Navadvipatattva* (1895)
4. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī,* Vol. 4, 1892, pp. 24,79
5. Ibid., Vol. 4, 1892, pp. 68-69
6. Anāth Nāth Basu, *Mahātmā Śiśir Kumār Ghoṣe* (ed. 1976) Matilāl Ghose's introduction, p. 2.
7. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī,* Vol. 4, 1892, p. 1
8. Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 37.
9. Ibid., Vol. 2, 1885, p. 78

influenced by the 'Aryanism' of a section of the Bengali nationalists of the time.

Dutta was also a Darwinian. According to him, for each of the ten stages of evolution, Viṣṇu appeared as an *Avatāra* who was particularly relevant to that stage of evolution. This interpretation of the *Avatāra* was widely accepted.[1] Later on in *Caitanyaśikṣāmṛta*, Kedārnāth described four broad stages of civilisation, namely, the primitive stage, the scientific and technological stage, the ethical stage, and the devotional stage. Each of these stages had appropriate forms of worship.[2]

Sajjanatoṣaṇī offered some suggestions with regard to the restructuring of the caste system. These suggestions possibly represented the social philosophy of the enlightened Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. These were as follows :[3]

1. Birth should never be a factor in the determination of caste. Caste should be determined according to the *Svabhāva* or nature of a man and his parents. Thus a son's caste may be quite different from that of his parents.
2. A man's caste should not be considered at all before he attains the age of fifteen.
3. Once fixed, the caste of a man should be preserved and protected from the assaults of the so-called *Samājapatis* by the *zamindārs* and the government. The journal did not regard the Vaiṣṇava caste as an untouchable caste.

In 1886, Kedārnāth Datta founded the *Viśvavaiṣṇava Sabhā*. It was the combination of two societies called *Harisādhana Samāja* and *Vaiṣṇava Sabhā*. It was claimed that the *Viśva Vaiṣṇava Sabhā* had been founded by Rūpa Gosvāmin and Jīva Gosvāmin. Later the *Sabhā* was transformed into the Gauḍīya Mission. The Mission established branches in different parts of India. Both celibate monks and householders were its members. The monks lived in the monasteries established by the Mission. The Gauḍīya Mission preached the folliwing concepts :[4]

1. Absolute Truth was self-evident as Kṛṣṇa.

1. *Akṣaya Sāhitya Sambhāra*, Vol. 1, pp. 130-132
2. *Caitanyaśiksāmṛta*, pp. 10, 21
3. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, Vol. 2, 1885, pp. 123-124.
4. Summarised from *Outlines of Gauḍīya Mission*, published by Calcutta Gauḍīya Mission.

2. Kṛṣṇa, God, was equipped with transcendental personality and attributes.
3. One could worship God only at His pleasure.
4. The *guru* was the medium through which God's grace reached man.
5. The concept of incomprehensible duality in non-duality was faultless.
6. Without *bhakti* none could hope to be a true spiritualist.
7. Love for Kṛṣṇa had to be both deep and dynamic.
8. The Universe was not an Illusion. It was real, as it had a vital link with Kṛṣṇa.
9. The 'Holy Name' was of supreme importance in the *Kali* age.

The Gauḍīya Mission had ostensibly no social aim. It did not pretend that it was an organisation with a social mission. But it set up schools, libraries, research centres and free hospitals. These, however, had only secondary importance. Its primary object was to preach mysticism.

VIII

Some Vaiṣṇavas felt that Vaiṣṇavism should have a programme of social work among the weaker sections of the society. Three Vaiṣṇava missionaries worked hard to spread the faith among the untouchables. They were Prabhu Jagatvandhu (1871-1921), Atulcandra Campati (d.1925) and Haribolānanda Thākur.

Prabhu Jagatvandhu, a Brāhmaṇa who read up to the Matriculation standard, renounced the world early in his youth, and dedicated himself to the task of 'Vaisnavising' the untouchables. He worked among the Doms of North Calcutta and the Namaśūdras of Faridpur and Jessore. The latter founded a sect, or a caste-sect of their own which was known as the Mahānta sect.[1] Prabhu Jagatvandhu, however, became a mystic. He advised his followers to give up excess in everything. His *mantra* was as follows :[2]

1. B. G. Roy, *Religious Movements in Modern Bengal*, p. 95
2. The full biography of Prabhu Jagatvandhu is entitled *Śrī Śrī Vandhulīlātaranginī* (7 Vols. published by the Uddhāraṇa Matha of Cacutta). The mystic concepts of the *Prabhu* are discussed by Shovārāṇī Basu: *Some Mystics of Modern India*, pp. 249-261. For a collection of Prabhu Jagatbandhu's songs, See *Śrī Śrī Harikathā*. Mahānāma Sampradāya, Calcutta, 5th. ed. 1971. Most of these songs were composed by Jagatbandhu in a highly mystical language which is incomprehensible.

Haripuruṣa Jagatvandhu Mahā Uddhāraṇa
Cāṛihasta Candraputra Hā Kītapatana.

These lines had a mystic meaning. His disciples regarded him as "the *Līlā*-combination of all things." They also founded the Uddhāraṇa Matha in Māniktalā, Caḷcutta.

Atulcandra Campati was Prabhu Jagatvandhu's brother-in-law, and the Head Master of a school. He became the *Prabhu's* disciple. and worked very hard for the welfare of the untouchables and the unfortunate prostitutes of Calcutta. He started a movement against drunkenness and prostitution. But he did not get any help from the typical *gurus* and the gosvāmins.[1]

Haribolānanda Thākur was one of those rare Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who worshipped Kālī. He roamed about in Calcutta, asking everybody, including children and the Europeans, to chant the name of God. He was the leading organiser of many of the aforementioned *Harisabhās,* which were financed by his rich Suvarṇavaṇik disciple, Kṣetra Mallik. Haribolānanda's disciples regarded him as the incarnation of Advaita Ācārya. He, too, worked among the untouchables of Calcutta for many years.[2]

The developing mass media in Calcutta and the other urban centres of Bengal perceptibly influenced the Vaiṣṇava outlook. The Vaiṣṇava ideals were not, properly speaking, secularised, but democratised. The effect of democratisation was seen in the strengthening of the 'friendly' or the 'brotherly mood'.

The chief proponent of the Nityānanda ideal in Bengal and Orissa was a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava mendicant named Rādhāramaṇa Caraṇa Dāsa Deva (b.1853). After marrying thrice, and working for some years as the Manager of a tyrannical *zamindār*, Rādhāramaṇa renounced the world. The immediate reason behind his renunciation of the world was the extremely unpleasant experience of a peasants' revolt, which he had to suppress in a rather cruel manner. Rādhāramaṇa was initiated by a Vaiṣṇava ascetic who told him to wander about as a mendicant, and preach the gospel of fraternity. Later on Rādhāramaṇa established two powerful centres in Puri and Navadvīpa, respectively.

The fundamental ideas of Rādhāramaṇa are very lucidly stated in the six volumes of his biography, entitled *Caritasudhā* which was

1. *Gaudiya Vaiṇṣava Jīvana,* Vol. 2, pp. 273-280. Atulcandra Campati died in 1925.
2. I bid., Vol. 2, pp. 399-409

written by Rāmadāsa Bābāji, a brilliant *Kītana* singer, and the founder of a Vaiṣṇava museum and library in Varāhanagar (1933). Rāmadāsa was Caraṇadāsa's disciple.

Rādhāramaṇa repudiated Vaiṣṇava sectarianism. He worshipped Kālī, Durgā and other non-Vaiṣṇava deities, and he had many Śākta friends like Svāmī Jnānânanda.[3] But he did not support the sacrifice of animals on the occasions of Śākti worship.[4] He asked the Bengalis to give up their narrow, provincial outlook and respect all Indians as their brothers. He said that Caitanya had quitted Bengal because he could not tolerate the meanness of the Bengalis.[5] One of his disciples named Navadvīpa Gosvāmin tried to deify him. Rādhāramaṇa expelled him from his circle.[6]

He attached the greatest importance to Nityānanda. He preached two stages of spiritual culture. In the first stage one must worship Nityānanda as a servant. Nityānanda makes it possible for the worshipper to see the materialised form of Caitanya. In the second stage the worshipper humbly requests Caitanya to enable him to worship Rādhākṛṣṇa, as a *manjarī* or *Sakhī*.[7] It is quite clear that Rādhāramaṇa wanted to bring about a balanced synthesis of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *bhâvas* or moods. His disciple Gopālakṛṣṇa worshipped Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as "Lalitā Sakhī". Gopālakṛṣṇa, who was an expert cook, wore the dress of a woman and simulated the conduct of a lady "untouched by the rays of the sun."[8] The other disciples of Rādhāramaṇa addressed Gopālakṛṣṇa as "Lalitā Didi" (Elder Sister Lalitā). Naturally Rādhāramaṇa's adoration of Nityánanda was misunderstood by many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. But he made it clear that his worship of Nityānanda was not an end in itself. The ultimate aim of his *Sādhanā* was the realisation of Kṛṣṇa.[9] But he had no respect for the traditional rituals of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, though he followed the *Smaraṇamangala* formula.[10]

3. *Caritasudhā,* I, p. 176; II, pp. 74-76, 135-144; IV, pp. 53-54; VI, pp. 39-41
4. Ibid. II, pp. 76-83
5. Ibid. I, pp. 180-182
6. Ibid. II, pp. 160-164
7. *Caritasudha,* 1, pp. 245-250
8. Ibid., II, pp. 76-83
9. Ibid., II, pp. 60-61, 86-95
10. Ibid., II, p. 113

Rādhāramaṇa bitterly criticised those who made much ado about 'human progress.' He boldly advocated the view that man was the worst of all animals, and that even cows and dogs were, in certain respects, far superior to him. The redemption of the modern man lay in a sincere cultivation of spiritual values.[1]

He never advised the householders to renounce the world. His ideal was the ideal of 'disinterested' service to everybody, including parents, children, wife, brothers, sisters, and servants.[2] He denounced those who were using Vaiṣṇavism as a trade or profession.[3]

Social inequality was, according to him, a consequence of the natural defects of men and women. But its effects might be minimised if the individuals constituting a particular society tried to achieve "emotional equality". Caste should better be forgotten in social relations. Rādhāramaṇa was perhaps the singular Vaiṣṇava who did not preach the harmful theory of Vaiṣṇava-Brāhmaṇa equation. To him caste was utterly meaningless. What mattered most was humanity as a totality of human relations.[4] He recognised Jesus Christ as a very important *Avatāra* of God.[5]

Finally, Rādhāramaṇa propagated a very interesting "theory of uncertainty". According to him all the moods, servile, friendly, filial and erotic, had a *parakiyâ* base. The servants, friends, parents and the milkmaids of Vṛndāvana always felt an uncertainty about the unpredictable behaviour of Kṛṣṇa. The *parakiyā* mood is sustained in this uncertainty.[6] Rādhāramaṇa was of opinion that every type of relation with Kṛṣṇa was psychic. Nobody could establish with Him any relation in the physical sense of the term.[7]

1. *Caritasudhā*, 1, pp. 272-278; 2, pp. pp. 284-286.
2. Ibid., 2, p. 68
3. Ibid., 2, pp. 195-196
4. Ibid., 2, pp. 287-294
5. Ibid., 2, pp. 396-97
6. Ibid., 6, pp. 79-80
7. Ibid., 6, p. 81.

CHAPTER XXII

VAIṢṆAVISM AND THE BENGALI 'RENAISSANCE'

I

The nineteenth century witnessed the ascendancy of rational judgment over blind faith among the upper caste Hindus of Bengal. Both the conservative and the liberal Hindus welcomed the spread of English education and adopted many Western concepts. But English education and Western concepts could not weaken Hinduism in Bengal. There is no evidence of langour, neglect or depression of Hinduism at any time during the nineteenth century. The impressive durability of Hinduism as a religion and as a way of life remained unquestionable. Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Durgā, Kālī and many other lesser gods and goddesses were very popular. The priests enjoyed great authority in the towns and the villages. The middle class Hindus in the urban areas observed all sorts of sacraments and rituals.[1]

But the 'educated' Bengali elite felt the need of modernising Hinduism. They wanted to clip off the superfluities and the superstitions for their own benefit. Rammohun Ray (1774-1833) propagated total reformation. He preached pantheism, the necessity of the repudiation of the caste system, and the suppression of such harmful superstitions as widow-burning. His views were, however, accepted by a small section of the Bengali elite. Later Īśvarcandra Vidyāsāgar (1820-1891) started a movement for the marriage of widows and prevention of polygamy. As a reformer Vidyāsāgar belonged to the class of Rammohun. But unlike Rammohun, Vidyāsāgar wrote almost nothing on religion.

A second group of upper caste Bengali Hindus thought of fastening a liberal interpretation on the myths and the philosophical systems of the Hindus. They spoke of the reformation of the Hindu spirit, without disturbing the forms and outward symbols of Hinduism. The ennobling of the spirit, so they believed, would result in the sublimation or refinement of the forms. These Bengali Hindus

1. The rituals observed by the upper caste Hindus of Bengal are narrated by Shib Chunder Bose in *The Hindoos As They Are* (1881), and Shoshee Chunder Dutt, in *India: Past and Present* (1884), Chs. XII, XIII, XV, XVI, XVIII. See also, Sri J. B. Phear, *The Aryan Village in India and Ceylon* (London, McMillan & Co. 1880), pp. 1-169.

did not support those who propagated drastic reforms. Their spokesman was Bankimchandra Cattopādhyāya (1838-1894), the great novelist. Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahamsa (1836-1886) preached that it was not essential for the Hindus to observe the caste system and rituals. The spirit of Hinduism was, according to him, one of tolerance, persuit of truth, and service to mankind. If one practised Hinduism with those ideals one would gradually rise above caste and superstitions.

A third group, which was rather amorphous, began to prophesy an "Aryan" revival in near future. The Indian Hindus, regardless of caste, clime and colour, were regarded by them as degenerate Aryans. The nationalist songs of the seventies and the eighties of the nineteenth century are full of references to the Aryan glories of the downtrodden Indian Hindus. The Bengalis were exhorted to revive their Aryan traditions. This 'Aryanism' became the slogan of both pantheistic Brāhmas and polytheistic votaries of the Hindu cults. Brāhmaism was regarded as the true Aryan-Hindu cult by Brāhma leaders like Rājnārayaṇ Basu (1826-1899).

Various aspects of Hinduism and Hindu society were discussed and debated upon in such famous cultural associations as the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge (1838), the Bethune Society (1851-1869), and the Burrabazar Family Literary Club (1857). The tremendous strength of Hinduism was described by Akṣayakumār Datta in *Bhāratavarṣīya Upāsaka Sampradāya* (1870-1882). The word 'revival' was used in a special sense in connection with Hinduism. Roughly speaking the word had two meanings. According to Bankimchandra Cattopādhyāya, Hindu revival meant nationalist awakening. According to Rāmakṛṣṇa, it meant universal religious and ethical uplift. The approach of the former was intensely intellectual. The approach of the latter was intuitive, non-intellectual and devotional. These two interpretations became the starting points of parallel revivalist movements after 1880, when the Brāhma movement grew weak owing to sectarian divisions. These two movements could not ignore Vaiṣṇavism and Caitanya.

II

Between 1870 and 1900 the Hindu intelligentsia of Bengal felt a deep urge to rediscover the Vaiṣṇava culture of Bengal. They unearthed a great mass of materials hitherto unknown. They found that Vaiṣṇavism was integrally connected with the growth and development of Bengali literature. The main emphasis of Vaiṣṇava research was, of course, laid on the Bengali phase of the Caitanya movement.

The leading scholars who worked for the discovery and dissemination of the Vaiṣṇava heritage were the following:

1. Rāmagati Nyāyaratna (1831-1894). In *Bānglābhāṣa O Sāhityaviṣayaka Prastāva* (1872) he sketched out a history of the Vaiṣṇava literature of Bengal.[1] He came to the conclusion that the Vaiṣṇavas created Bengali poetry.[2] He also gave some biographical data.[3]

2. Akṣayacandra Sarkār (1846-1917). He edited, with Sāradācaraṇ Mitra and Baradākānta Mitra, *Prācīnakāvyasamgraha*, and published it in parts. In 1884 the work was published in two volumes. The *Kāvyas*, serially published in it, were the *Padāvalī* of Vidyāpati, Caṇḍīdāsa, Govindadāsa, and the *Mangalakāvyas* of Rāmeśvara and Mukundarāma. Akṣayacandra himself was a Vaiṣṇava and a strict vegetarian. The *Padāvalī* were edited with great care in a critical manner.

3. Rāmadāsa Sen. (1845-1887). In an essay in his *Aitihāsika Rahasya*[4] he dealt with the biographies and principal works of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *Ācāryas*. The essay was written from the historical point of view.

4. Rājakṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, (1846-1886). His *Nânâpravandha* (1885) contains a biographical sketch of Vidyápati and an analysis of the themes of his songs.[5]

5. Rajanīkānta Gupta (1849-1900). He wrote a biography of Jayadeva entitled *Jayadevacaritra* (1873). It was written as a prize essay. The author was awarded a cash prize of Rs. 50/- by Mahārājā Saurīndramohan Tagore of Pathuriāghatá, Calcutta. The work has musical notations of the songs of the *Gītagavinda*, which were prepared by Kṣetramohan Goswāmī.

6. Aghornāth Cattopádhyāya, a Brāhma author, wrote *Bhakta-*

1. Part I: Vidyāpati, pp. 28-31; Caṇḍīdāsa, pp. 31-34; Brajabhākhā, pp. 34-43; Caitanya, pp. 51-54.
2. p. 55
3. Part 2: *Vijnāpana*; Part 1: 56-71
4. "Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavācaryavṛnder Granthāvalīr Vivaraṇa", in *The Works of Dr. Ramdas Sen*, I, 3rd ed. 1902, pp. 85-101.
5. "Vidyāpati", pp. 11-33 in the 3rd ed. of *Nānāprabandha* (1937)

caritamālā and *Haridāsa Thākura* in 1896.[1] Biographical sketches of Sanātana Gosvāmin, Rūpa Gosvāmin and Jīva Gosvāmin were given in the first work. In 1894 he wrote a biography of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvâmin entitled *Śrīmad-raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīra Jīvanacarita.*[2]

7. The celebrated Indologist Haraprasād Śāstrī (1853-1931) emphasized the necessity of discovering the Vaiṣṇava lore in Bengal in a lecture delivered in 1891 at a meeting of the Kambuliyātolā Reading Club (Calcutta). The subject of his lecture was "Vernacular Literature of Bengal before the introduction of English Education." This lecture of 16 pages was published in 1891. He also delivered learned lectures on Jayadeva and Vidyāpati in the Vangīya Sāhitya Pariṣad (established in 1894).[3]

8. A famous journalist, Nagendranāth Gupta (1861-1940) edited the songs of Vidyāpati in *Vidyāpati Thākurer Padāvalī* (1909). He also delivered lectures on the Vaiṣṇava literary tradition of Mithila and Govindadāsa.[4] Nagendranāth believed that Govindadāsa was a poet of Mithila. The erroneous view was dispelled by Sukumar Sen in 1929.[5]

9. Nagendranáth Basu (1866-1938). He edited the first complete Bengali encyclopaedia entitled *Vaśvakoṣa,* which is a variable mine of information. Numerous Vaiṣṇava celebrities, rituals, and places associated with the Vaiṣṇava movement are discussed in the encyclopaedic volumes. Nagendranath also edited Jayânandā's *Caitanyamangala.*

10. Jagatbandhu Bhadra (b. 1841). He edited, with detailed notes and biographical sketches, *Gaurapadataranginī* which was published by the Vangīya Sāhitya Pariṣad in 1903. Bhadra's biographical sketches and notes were used by Satish Chandra Ray in his edition of the *Padakalpataru* anthology. In many respects *Gaurapadataranginī* represented a pioneering effort.

11. The linguistic aspects of *Padāvalī* literature were analysed by G. A. Grierson in *The Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* (Calcutta 1889).

1. *Bhaktacaritamālā* was published by Gurudāsa Cattopādhyāya, Calcutta.
2. These works were reviewed in *Sajjanatoṣanī,* 1894, Vol. 6, pp. 37-39
3. *Sāhitya Sādhaka Caritamālā,* Vol. 7, p. 45
4. Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 71
5. Sukumar Sen, "Govindadāsa Kavirāja", *Vicitra Nivandha,* pp. 72-90

12. Yogendranath Vidyābhuṣaṇ (1845-1904). He wrote a biography of Caitanya.[1]
13. Hemchandra Bandyopadhyaya (1838-1903), the poet, prepared a comparative study of the teachings of Kṛṣṇa and Christ in his *Life of Śrīkṛṣṇa.*[2]
14. Balendranāth Tagore (1870-1899) discussed the excellence of Jayadeva's poetry in a brilliant essay entitled 'Jayadeva'.[3]
15. The architectural concepts in *Haribhaktivilāsa* attracted the attention of the noted historian Akṣayakumār Maitreya (1861-1930).[4]
16. Rev. Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāya (1813-1885) edited and translated into English *Nāradapancarātra* (1865).
17. Rabindranāth Tagore (1861-1941) and Śrīścandra Majumdār (1860-1908) edited *Padaratnāvalī* (1885).
18. Śiśirkumār Ghoṣe (1840-1911), founder and editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* was once a Brāhma. His elder brother Hemantakumār Ghose converted him into Vaiṣṇavism. Śiśirkumar regarded himself as a "marked servant of Caitanya." He wrote biographies of Narottama Datta, (*Narottamacarita,* 1891), Caitanya (*Śrī Amiyanimāicarita,* 6 volumes, 1892-1911), Pravodhānanda Sarasvatī (*Śrī Pravodhānanda Sarasvatīr Jīvanacarita,* 1889) and Gopālabhatta Gosvāmīn (1896). He published an edition of Vṛndāvana Dāsa's CBH and Vaiṣṇava Dāsa's *Padakalpataru* (3 volumes, 1897). *Lord Gauranga or Salvation for All,* his biography of Caitanya written in English, was published in 1897. He edited two Vaiṣṇava journals, namely, *Śrī Śrī Viṣṇupriyā Patrikā* (first issue, dated Caitra, 1890), and *Śrī Śrī Gauraviṣṇupriyā Patrikā* (first issue, dated Phālguna, 1901).
19. Dīnesh Chandra Sen (1866-1939) was the first historian of Bengali literature who discovered, by long and arduous research (which ruined his health), a great mass of materials for the study of Vaiṣṇava religion and lite-

1. No. 4 of *Prātahsmaraṇiyacaritamālā,* 2nd ed., 1885,
2. Manmathanāth Ghose, *Hemacandra,* Vol. 1, pp. 98-99
3. It was included in Balendranāth's *Citra O Kavya* (1894): *Balendra Granthāvalī,* Calcutta, 1952, pp. 34-42. See also: pp. 196 f.; 355 f.; 331 f.
4. Akṣayakumār Maitreya's letter to Ardhendra Kumar Ganguli (O. C. Ganguli) quoted in *Sāhityasādhaka Caritamālā,* Vol. V, p. 50

rature. (see bibliography). Dinesh Chandra Sen's discussions and explanations are characterised by profound devotion for Caitanya and adoration of the Vaiṣṇava poets.

20. Brahmavāndhava Upādhyāya (1861-1907), celebrated editor of the anti-British Bengali newspaper *Sandhyā*, a friend of the Extremists, formerly a Christian and later an orthodox Hindu, may be said to have initiated the study of Vaiṣṇava lore in a little known work named *Pālāpārvaṇa* (January, 1925).

21. Brahmavāndhava's example was followed by Dīnendrakumar Rāy (1869-1943). He wrote highly interesting sketches of *Rathayātrā, Jhulanayātrā, Nandotsava* and *Lakṣmīpūjā* in a remarkable work entitled *Pallicitra* (1904). The *Snānayātrā* and the *Dolayātrā* festivals are described in *Pallivaicitra* (1905).[1]

Some characteristics of these memorable attempts should be noted. The emphasis on the discovery of materials relating to the careers and activities of the Vaiṣṇava leaders of Bengal was heavier than that on the Vṛndāvana phase of the Caitanya movement. In the context of the Vaiṣṇava developments in Bengal, the conversion of 'Yavana' Haridāsa looked significant to quite a few scholars and novelists.

The second important aspect was discernible in the pre-occupation with the discovery of Vaiṣṇava music and poetry. The early initiative in collecting, editing and publishing them was taken by Akṣayacandra Sarkár, Sāradācaraṇ Mitra, Jagatvandhu Bhadra, Rabindranath Tagore, Śrīśacandra Majumdār, Nagendranáth Basu, Nagendranāth Gupta, Káliprasanna Kāvyaviśārada, Ramaṇīmohan Mallik and Kālidās Nāth. The assiduous search for *Padāvalī* literature had probably a link with the nationalist ferment in Bengal during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. It was a part of the *Swadeśī* culture.

Along with the discovery and publication of *Padávalī* lyrics, there was also strenuous research on the bio-data and identities of the *Padāvalī* poets of Bengal. The initiative in this respect was taken by Jagatvandhu Bhadra, Acyutacaraṇa Caudhurī, Nagendranāth Basu, Hárādhan Datta and Amūlyadhan Rāyabhatta. In certain instances, however, an excessive weight was attached to legends

1. *Pallīcitra*, 3rd. ed. 1922, pp. 85 f.; 105 f.; 129 f.; 151-66; 209-34; also *Pallī Vaicitra*, Ananda Publishers, Calcutta, 1982 p. 103 f.

and lore. But the importance of the work done by them was recognised by later historians of the Bengali literature. Their work revealed the immeasurable depth of Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal, and opened up new vistas. Formerly the Brāhmaṇa intellectuals neglected or ignored the literary results of the Vaiṣṇava movement. The orthodox Vaiṣṇavas carefully guarded their manuscripts. The scholars and savants mentioned above saved the Vaiṣṇava heritage from oblivion.

The Vangīya Sāhitya Pariṣad played a vital role in the awakening of scholarly interest in Vaiṣṇava literature and history. The organisation liberally encouraged studies in Vaiṣṇavism. Numerous articles on Vaiṣṇava literary and ecclesiastical developments were published in the *Vangīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā,* which was the most authentic and outstanding journal of Vaiṣṇava studies. A speciality of the articles on Vaiṣṇavism published in this journal was their non-sectarian, objective and historical approach. This approach distinguished them from the articles published in the contemporary Vaiṣṇava journals, most of which had a sectarian bias or suffered from a vague Vaiṣṇava 'modesty' or superiority complex. Some very good articles were also published in other contemporary literary journals. such as *Bhāratī, Navyabhārat Anusandhān,* etc.

A few Brāhma intellectuals tried to understand and interpret the Vaiṣṇava traditions. The outstanding Brāhma biographer of Vaiṣṇava saints was Aghornāth Cattopādhyāya. A great mass of data on the Vaiṣṇava sects was collected by Akṣayakumār Datta. But at least one Brāhma intellectual took a highly critical view of the ideas and activities of Caitanya and Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal. He was Umesh Chandra Batabyāl. Emphasis on the linguistic peculiarites of the *Padāvalī* was laid by Rabindranath Tagore, who thus created the basis of the study of the *Padāvalī* from the linguistic standpoint.

The search for the identity of mediaeval Vaiṣṇava leaders of Bengal sometime resulted in an emphasis on *genius loci.* Acyutacaraṇ Tattvanidhi[1] and Padmanāth Bhattācārya, for instance, began to elaborate a theory of the *Śrīhattiyā* origin of the Vaiṣṇava movement and *Smārta* culture of sixteenth century Navadvīpa.[2]

1. Vide, the four parts of his *Srīhatter Itivṛtta* wherein biographies of "Śrīhattiyā" Vaiṣṇavas resident in Navadvīpa are given.
2. "Padmanath Bhattacarya", by Jatindramohan Bhattacarya in *Sahitya Sādhaka Caritamālā* Vol. 11, pp. 18-47.

The significance of the quibbling over birth-places was that it fully revealed the sudden awareness of the historical and cultural value of Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal. Later Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya would totally ignore the cultural developments in eastern and northern Bengal in his essays collected in *Gauḍa-Vanga Samskṛti*. The overwhelming emphasis on the history of Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal and the apathy towards the theology of the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins compelled Sushil Kumar De to devote the major part of his *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement* to an analysis of the works of the Gosvāmins.

The results of Amūlyadhan Rāyabhatta's strenuous field-work may be seen in his *Dvādaśa Gopāla,* which is still the best work on the *Gopāla* abbacies. Another brilliant work of the same type is Dīnendrakumar Rāya's *Pallīcitra,*[1] which is a mine of information on Vaiṣṇava festivals and fairs in Nadiā. It was noted by Rāya that three hundred prostitutes were allowed to gather from all parts of rural Bengal in the *Snānayātrā* fair in Murutiyā village, and entertain a rustic clientele.[2] The fair was also famous for its grand exhibition of the products of village craftsmen.[3] A big market for earthen dolls met during the *Rathayātrā* fair in Govindapur village, where Christian missionaries were allowed to spread the gospel, and wrestlers were encouraged to show their physical strength.[4] In charming language Dīnendrakumar describes the tremendous enthusiasm of the Hindu and Muhammadan peasants on these joyful occasions.

III

The efforts outlined above should be judged in the context of the undeniable fact that the British government was never particularly willing to buttress any 'native' endeavour to unearth the national heritage. On the other hand, Western assessment of Hinduism was often tantamount to severe condemnation of the Hindu religions.

"The history of these gods", wrote the military historian Orme, "is a heap of the greatest absurdities. It is Eswara twisting off the neck of Brahman ; it is the Sun who gets his teeth knocked out, and the Moon who has her face beat black and blue at a feast, at

1. Dīnendrakumār Rāya also wrote nearly three hundred detective stories, and taught Aurobindo Ghose Bengali.
2. *Pallicitra,* op. cit., pp. 85-101
3. *Pallicitra,* pp. 105-126.
4. Ibid.

which the gods quarrel and fight with the spirit of a mob."[1] "The whole history of Crishna", wrote the French Indologist Anquetil Duperron, "is a mere tissue of Greek and Roman obscenities, covered with a veil of spirituality which, among fanatics of all descriptions, conceal the most abominable enormities."[2]

The attitude of William Jones (1746-1794) who translated the *Gītagovinda* into English in 1792, Charles Wilkins (1749-1836), Henry Colebrooke (1765-1837) and Horace Hayman Wilson (1789-1860) was decidedly liberal. "Crishna", wrote Jones, "continues to this hour the darling god of the Indian women."[3]

It was, however, William Ward who gave a very interesting and detailed account of Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal.[4] He wrote that "Choitunyu was never more heard of after he went away to Puri."[5] He expressed his puritanical disgust after seeing some scenes of the *Kṛṣṇayātrā*. But he had a good word for the excellence of the Bengali language: "It is certainly a copious language", he wrote, "for there are no ideas, even of a metaphysical kind, which it is not capable of expressing."[6] We learn from him that the *Vairāgīs* married mostly prostitutes, that the *Boṣtami* nuns often acted as procuresses, and that "two parts out of ten of the whole Hindoo population of Bengal had changed their religion at the call of Choitunyu and Nityanundu".[7] He noted that the Vaiṣṇavas were abhorred by the Brāhmaṇas and other orthodox and upper caste Hindus mainly because the Vaiṣṇavas had formed an "upstart sect" with a "system" which was "a departure from the old one."[8] Ward was totally opposed to the Śākta religion, and took one Rev. Mr. Maurice to task for discerning a heavenly beatitude in the Tāntrika rituals.[9] He made a thorough enquiry into the sources of the income of the Vaiṣṇavas who acted as *gurus*. He was also interested in the activities of the Kartābhajā sect.

1. Quoted in Mill and Wilson's *History of British Inlia* (1858 ed.) Vo. 1, p. 275, fn.
2. Ibid., p. 219, fn.
3. Ibid., p. 249
4. *An Account of the Writings, Religion and Manners of the Hindoos*, (Serampore, 1811), 4 volumes.
5. Ward, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 261.
6. Ward, op. cit. Vol. 1, pp. 188-89
7. Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 436
8. Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 200, fn.
9. Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 331

William Carey (1761-1834) mentioned the legend of Sanātana and Rūpa in his Bengaḷi work entitled *Itihāsamāla.* (Serampore, 1812)[5]

James Mill's view of the Kṛṣṇa legend was entirely negative and very superficial.[6] What he regarded as "absolute renunciation of moral duties" militated against his utilitarian philosophy. He denounced the "grossest images of sensual pleasure", "the worship of the emblems of generative organs", and the ascription, to God Supreme, of "an immense train of obscene acts" which were engraved on the sacred cars, sculptured on the temples, and presented to the people as objects of adoration. The entire Vaiṣṇava mythology he described as something "wild". Mill almost chuckled in glee while quoting the following translation of a verse of the *Skandapurāṇa*:

> For he (Mahādeva) was libidinous, while going about stark naked, with a large club in his hand."[7]

Wilson, the 'Orientalist', made the following comments on Mill's historiography:

> Mill's view of Hindu religion "is full of very serious defects, arising from inveterate prejudices and imperfect knowledge. Every text, every circumstance, that makes against the Hindu character, is most assiduously cited, and everything in its favour as carefully kept out of sight, whilst a total neglect is displayed of the history of Hindu belief."[8]

One Dr. Tytler said: "The histories of Buddha, Salavahana and Krishna comprise nothing more than perverted copies of Christianity."[9] A British pornographer named Edward Sellon even described the pornographic possibilities of Hinduism in a work entitled *Annotations on the Sacred Writings of the Hindoos.* (London, 1865).[10]

To the British missionaries the temple of Jagannātha in Puri and the idols installed therein formed an obscene enigma. According to Gogerly, Dr. Claudius Buchanan, who landed in Bengal in 1790, was the first British missionary to witness and describe "the horrors of Juggernaut". "Juggernaut" was generally referred to by the mission-

5. *Itihāsamālā,* pp. 231-234, Story—9.
6. Mill and Wilson, op. cit. I, pp. 248-251
7. Ibid., p. 251
8. Mill and Wilson, op. cit. Vol. I, pp. 302-302, fn. The whole *History* is full of Wilson's notes of dissent.
9. Collet, *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Ray,* p. 140
10. Bernhardt J. Harwood, *Golden Age of Erotica,* Paperback Library, Inc., New Work, 1965, pp. 167-168

aries as "that Indian Moloch."[1] Gogerly wrote: "The whole history of this famous God (Kṛṣṇa) is one of lust, robbery, deceit and murder .... the history of the whole hierarchy of Hindooism is one of shameful iniquity, too vile to be described."[2]

The Bengali newspaper *Samācāradarpaṇa,* edited by Marshman, used every opportunity to attack the Vaiṣṇavas. In a long letter published in this paper on March 2, 1822, a critic listed quite a few irregularities of the Vaiṣṇavas[3]
James Stewart described the ten incarnations in *Timiranāsaka.*[4] These were merely powers of 'darkness' which Stewart tried to dispel.

The 'Orientalists' led by H. H. Wilson tried their utmost to remove the puritanical misconcepts. Their view was that Indian culture was too vast to be lightly poohpoohed or denounced. Wilson was a keen student of Hinduism and Sanskrit literature. He translated the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* into English in 1840. His informative articles on the *Religious Sects of the Hindus* were first published in *Asiatick Researches* in 1828. He had the notion that the erotic element in Vaiṣṇavism and the Śākta Tantra had some link with Muhammadan rule in India.

It was perhaps from the fifties of the nineteenth century that missionary opinion began to grow mild and a bit ambivalent with regard to the principal Hindu sects. The missionaries probably realised that the heaping of abuse on the Indian religions had not really helped them spread their faith in Bengal. The evolution of the missionary theories from the point of total rejection of Indian polytheism towards some sort of tolerant attitude is perceivable in the views expressed by Rev. Lal Bihari De in a review-article on "Chaitanya and the Vaishnavas of Bengal" which was published in the *Calcutta Review* (Vol. XV, 1851, pp. 169-201). Lalbihari De's parents were Vaiṣṇavas. He himself was christened Kālāgopāla.[5]

1. George Gogerly, *Tht Pioneers,* pp. 22-24. The other missionary assessments in *History of the Jagannātha Temple in the 19th. Century,* by Prazhāt Mukherji, Ch. 6, sections 2-3, pp. 202-222
2. Gogerly, op. cit. pp. 314-315
3. *Samvādpatre Sekāler Kathā,* Vol. I, (ed. B.S. 1344/1937), pp. 124-126
4. The original title of the work was *Tomonasuck* (1828). A new edition of this work was entitled *Timiranasuck* (1835)
5. *Recollections of my School Days* by Rev. L. B. De (ed. M. P. Saha), p. 448

Rev. De noted that no less than eight million Bengalis worshipped Caitanya. The great popularity of the sect he attributed to its simplicity, "virtual agreement with the existing religious ideas", "boundless credulity of the people", and the "zeal of the first Vaishnavas". Caitanya he described as a man of one idea, the unrelenting pursuit of which made him an imbecile. Rev. De believed that Caitanya was insane during the last twelve years of his life. The Caitanya movement was a fanatical movement, the general aim of which was to stimulate licentiousness. "No exhortations to moral purity are given .... no instructions of any kind imparted". De, however, committed the unpardonable blunder of confusing Cuttack with 'Nīlacala' (Puri).[1]

Lāḷbihārī De praised the simplicity and the emotional appeal of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava doctrine, and expressed his appreciation of the Vaiṣṇava's obliviousness of caste. He also praised the Vaiṣṇava mass medium of *Kīrtana*. He wrote: "We regard the system of Chaitanya as an interesting development of the religious consciousness of India. It is a sign of the times, and an index of the march of liberal ideas in religion." He favourably compared Caitanya with Martin Luther. But then he commented that Vaiṣṇavism was a fanatical cult because it had discarded knowledge.

The highly knowledgeable missionary, James Long, never belittled the strength of Vaiṣṇavism. He noted that one-fifth of the population of Bengal were followers of Caitanya, and that the strength of Vaiṣṇavism was increasing. Long gives many interesting data about the places situated on the banks of the Bhāgīrathī river.[2]

The compilers of the *Gazetteers*, beginning with W. W. Hunter, discovered and interpreted a great mass of materials in respect of the religious situation in rural Bengal. Their laborious research opened up a new vista.

Some of the missionaries, however, went on heaping abuse on the Indian religions. One Dr. Mac Nichol wrote a bantering essay

1. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XV, 1851, p. 171. Rev. De thought that the work of Vṛndāvana Dāsa was written in Sanskrit: Ibid., p. 172.
2. Rev. James Long, *Selected Papers*, ed. M. P. Saha, pp. 57-101; See also: M. A. Sherring, *Hindu Tribes and Castes as Represented in Benares* (London, 1872). Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal attracted the attention of Karl Marx, who noted some of the positive social results of the Vaiṣṇava movement of 'reformer' Caitanya. See Lawrence Krader, ed. *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*, 2nd ed. Van Gorcum Comp. B. V. Assen, The Netherlands, 1974, pp. 250-51, 260

on the songs of Caṇḍīdāsa. H. Beveridge, the eminent mediaevalist, wrote:[1]

> "Chaitanya was a dreamer, and more akin to George Fox than to Luther. He abandoned his household duties, and his head was always in the clouds. If he did not actually commit suicide, he certainly tried to drown himself. I am not sure if he really helped the world."

Here it should be noted that the relation between the missionary field-workers and the Vairāgī mendicants was never cordial. The missionaries succeeded in converting nearly five hundred Kartābhajās in Burdwan.[2] A considerable number of Christian converts in Jessore were once Kartābhajās. Many among the four thousand natives who became Christians in Kṛṣṇanagar belonged to the Kartābhajā sect.[3] But sometimes the Vaiṣṇavas strongly resisted the Christian assault on their strongholds. Gogerly records the struggle between the London missionaries of Māniktalā and some local Vairāgīs. The latter instigated a mob to attack the Mission House and beat the missionaries. "Our voices were drowned in the cry of *Hurry-bol, Hurry-bol*", writes Gogerly, "and we were compelled hastily to escape."[4] Later the missionaries even wrote pamphlets in Bengali against Caitanya and his followers. One of these pamphlets was titled *Caitanyatattvavodhikā.* It was published in 1896 in Kṛṣṇanagar by *Nadia Christian Sanmilanī* and the Henry Williams Commemoration Committee. The pamphlet heaped ridicule on the ideals and rituals of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. It debunked *Nāmayapa,* denigrated Caitanya, whom it described as an idiot, and attributed the supposed emasculation of the Bengalis to their adoration of the Vaiṣṇava love-cult. Lastly it described the Vaiṣṇavas as fools and barbarians.[5]

IV

The reaction of the Bengali leaders to the prevalence and popular appeal of Vaiṣṇavism was very complex. It showed no single pattern.

1. Opinions of Mac Nichol and Beveridge are quoted by D. C. Sen in *Caitanya and His Age* p. 267
2. KDI, Vol. 2, pp. 25-26.
3. Long, op. cit. p. 66 fn.
4. Gogerly, op. cit. pp. 54-55
5. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī,* VIII. 1896, pp. 113-119. No such bias is found in the detailed account of the religious affiliations of the tribes and castes of Bengal given by H. H. Risley in *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal,* (2 Vols.), Calcutta, 1981 ed.

Raja Rammohan Ray's parents were devout Vaiṣṇavas.[1] Rammohun's own "reverence for Viṣṇu was at one time so great that he would not even take a draught of water without first reciting a chapter of the *Bhágavatapurāna* . . . He could not bear to witness the performance of the *Yātrā* (or Popular Play) of *Mān Bhanjan* in which God Krishna weeps, and his peacock headgear and green clothes are seen rolling in the dust."[2]

In 1816 Rammohun told Marshman and Carey at Serampore an anecdote about a petty theft of Kṛṣṇa. Then he said: "The sweeper of my house would not do such an act, and can I worship a God sunk lower than the man who washes my floors ?"[3]

The reasons for this great change in Rammohun's attitude towards Kṛṣṇa are not far to seek.

Rammohun is said to have gradually derived his ideas from Aristotelian syllogism, Bacon's theory of knowledge, Locke's philosophy of human understanding, the works of the Deists of the eighteenth century and the French Encyclopaedists, Hume's philosophy, the writings of Thomas Paine, the works of the French Theophilanthropists, Arabian logic, and the *Koran,* the *Bible* and the ancient Sanskrit texts.[4] Quite naturally Rammohun considered the merits of Vaiṣṇavism as a rationalist historian. But instead of explaining the reasons behind the popularity of the Vaiṣṇava faith, he merely catalogued the negative features of Vaiṣṇavism and the Vaiṣṇavas. He did not express any opinion on the positive results of the Caitanya movement, though the writings of Raghunandana appeared to him to be progressive.[5] Rammohun was opposed to the caste system. But he did not express any opinion on the egalitarianism of the Vaiṣṇava creed.

Rammohun's rejection of Vaiṣṇavism may be explained as a reaction to the harsh criticism of his way of life and his theories by the orthodox elements, who were supported by the Vaiṣṇavas. Rammohun was of opinion that the cultivation of knowledge would yield greater benefit than simple devotion.[6] He believed

1. Collet, *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy* (1962) p. 4
2. Collet, pp. 5-6
3. Collet, pp. 113-114
4. Nagendranāth Cattopādhyāya, *Mahātmā Rājā Rāmohana Rāyera Jivanacarita* (ed. 1972), p. 282-319
5. *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Ray* (Panini Office, Allahabad, 1906), pp. 71, 368, 371-72
6. He quoted the *Gita* to prove this point. See, *Rammohana Rāyer Granthavali* (ed. Banerji and Das), 'Gosvāmir Sahit Vicār', Vol. 2, pp. 63-64

that liberation from the worldly bondage lay in the acquirement of knowledge. Another factor was Rammohun's appreciation of the Śaiva form of marriage, which he considered progressive.[4]

Highly interesting and instructive is Rammohun's refutation of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dogma. He was opposed to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theory of the incomprehensibility of the Vedas.[5] He rejected the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theory of the link between Vedic-Upaniṣadic literature and the later mythologies.[6] He did not believe in the theory that the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* was a commentary on the *Vedāntasūtra*.[7] He made it clear that Kṛṣṇa was not mentioned in the *Vedāntasūtra*, and that greater importance was ascribed to Śiva than to Kṛṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Purāṇas*, and the *Upaniṣads*.[8] He doubted the authenticity of some of the *Purāṇas* and *Samhitās* which constituted the 'evidence' of the Gauḍïya Vaiṣṇava dogma.[9]

Rammohun discussed the legend of Kṛṣṇa as it was found in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, and came to the conclusion that the *Upaniṣad* certainly did not depict Kṛṣṇa as Brahman.[10] It should be noted that Rammohun did not discard devotion. But he argued that the *Gitā* had put much greater emphasis on the spiritual significance of knowledge than on that of blind devotion.[11]

The rationalist approach of Rammohun was not understood by the conservative Hindus who, as a class, still belonged to the early mediaeval times. Even Tāriṇī Devī, Rammohun's old mother, severed her relation with him, and passed her last days in Puri. Nandalāl Tagore, son of Harimohan Tagore of Pathuriāghātā (North Calcutta), commissioned a Sanskrit scholar named Kāśīnātha Tarkapancānana to write a pamphlet on what were supposed to be the iconoclastic views and Anglo-Muhammadan manners of Rammohun. The *Paṇḍīta* wrote *Pāṣaṇḍapīḍaṇa* which contained a vicious attack on the Rājā's character and concepts. He quoted verses from a work named *Anantasamhitā*, and also from an apocryphal copy of the *Mātsyapurāṇa* with

4. *Rām Mohana Raya Granthāvali*, Vol. 6, pp. 179-180. It was believed that the Rājā was a practising Tāntrika. Nagendranāth Cattopādhyāya, op. cit. p. 320
5. *Granthāvalī*, Vol. 2, Gosvāmïr Sahit Vicār', p. 45
6. Ibid., pp. 66-67
7. Ibid,. pp. 48-49
8. Ibid., pp. 51, 59
9. Ibid., p. 27, p. 38; Vol. 6, pp. 132-134
10. *Granthāvoli*, Vol. 2, "Gosvamir Sahit Vicar", pp. 48-59
11. Ibid., p. 63

a view to evidencing the divinity of Caitanya, whom he described as an incarnation of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. The *Paṇḍita* wrote :

> What a surprise ! This baron of wine bibbers, (thereby meaning Rammohun), this drunken moron, insensate in drunken jollity, now poohpoohs Caitanya, Nityānanda and Advaita.....But his father and mother worshipped them, even ate the left-over of the Vaiṣṇavas, and thus attained salvation."[1] (Translated)

Rammohun's reply to this attack came in the form of a brilliant pamphlet entitled *Pathyapradāna.* In it he wrote that the Vaiṣṇavas themselves had committed the greatest blasphemy by depicting Kṛṣṇa as a womanizer.[2] He regarded *Anantasamhitā* as an apocryphal work written by some nameless follower of Caitanya. Such works, he wrote, might be written *ad infinitum* in support of an infinite number of sectarian theologies.[3] He quoted some verses from *Tantraratnākara* in which Caitanya and his cardinals were described as demoniac enemies of Śiva.[4] It must be noted that Rammohun never questioned the authenticity of the Tantras. He respected them as *Śāstra* composed by god Śiva Himself. This unshakable belief in the infallibility of the Tantras, however, made his position very weak.[5]

The fact that Caitanya was an exceptional Bengali had no sentimental appeal for him. But he was prepared to accept devotion as a sound principle of worship. He criticised the Unitarian Christians for their lack of devotional zeal.[6] But he was certainly the first modern Indian to emphasize the value of inductive logic, empirical analysis and the study of the etymological aspects of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. He was not prepared to denigrate the interpretation of *Vedanta* by Śankarācārya. Mere fable he was not prepared to accept as evidence. "Rammohun", wrote Kissorychand Mitter, "tried to subvert Hinduism and disseminate purer

1. Granthāvalī. Vol. 6, "Pāṣaṇḍapīḍaṇa", p. 51.
2. Ibid., pp. 130-131, "Pathyapradāna".
3. *Granthavali,* Vol. 6, "Pathyapradan" pp. 132-134.
4. Ibid., pp. 132-134.
5. Ibid., pp. 20, 179.
6. Collect, op. cit., p. 372.

and more elevated notions of religion and morality."[7] It must, however, be noted that though he was a critic of the caste system he failed to discern the anti-caste orientation of the Caitanya movement. In Mahārāstra, however, Mahadev Govinda Ranade (1842-1901) fully appreciated the anti-caste teachings of the Maratha *bhakti*-saints.[8]

The foreign critics of the Indian creeds and myths had viciously attacked whatever they considered morally reprehensible and ethically unsound. Rammohun Ray, with a far deeper acquaintance with the Hindu religious texts, took a critical view of those concepts which looked irrational, superstitious, dogmatic and retrogressive.

V

With the emergence of 'Young Bengal' as an intellectual group which had considerable importance, Vaiṣṇavism as a subject of study receded into the background. The Vaiṣṇava contributions to Bengali literature were not stressed upon in Kāśīprasād Ghose (1809-1873)'s essay on *Bengali Works and Writers* (1830).[9] The Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge, founded by 'Young Bengal' in 1838, is not known to have held any seminar or organised any lecture on Vaiṣṇavism. One reason behind the Young Bengal's dislike of Hinduism in general was the criticism of their waywardness by the orthodox Hindus.

Later on Pyāricānd Mitra (1814-1882), who was once a leader of Young Bengal, displayed a good deal of understanding of the Vaiṣṇava point of view. In his epoch-making novel *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* (1858), Byācārām, a Vaiṣṇava landlord of Bowbazar, Calcutta, often criticizes the Bengali new rich for their moral lapses. In this work there is a reference to Vṛndāvana, which is the last refuge of two poor and humiliated Bengali ladies.[10]

7. K. C. Mitter, "Rammohun Ray" published in *Nineteenth Century Studies*, No. 1, January, 1973, pp. 46-47.
8. M. G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power* (Bombay, 1961 reprint), "The Saints and Prophets Maharastra".
9. *Samvādpatre Sekāler Kathā*, Vol. 1 (ed. 1937), pp. 59-62.
10. *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* Satsāhitya Granthāvalī, Vasumatī ed. Vol. 2, pp. 255-261.

Pyāricānd's younger brother Kissorychand Mitter (1822-1873) wrote a series of articles on the "Territorial Aristocracy of Bengal" in which he furnished some data about places in Burdwan, Nadia, Rajshahi and Murshidabad, which were associated with the Caitanya movement.[11] He also wrote an article on Caitanya in 1872, in which he judged the merits of the Caitanya movement from the viewpoint of a mid-Victorian social reformer.[12]

To many young radicals Bengali literature, a major part of which consisted of Vaiṣṇava *Padāvalī,* was utterly obscene. This erroneous view was challenged by the poet Rangalāl Bandyopādhyāya (1827-1887) in an essay entitled *Bānglā Kavitā Viṣayaka Pravandha.*[13] In this work the author indicated his awareness of the great literary awakening brought about by the Vaiṣṇava movement in Bengal.[14] The essay was written in 1852. Two years later Rājendralāla Mitra (1822-1891), who belonged to a Vaiṣṇava family, edited Karṇapūra's *Caitanyacandrodaya* (1854). He added a valuable introduction to it. He discussed in it the merits of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. He was influenced by the opinions of Lal Bihari De. Comparing Caitanya with Martin Luther, Mitra wrote : "The European Reformer exerted his head and heart to cleanse the Church of the manifold corruptions.....while his Bengali contemporary laboured assiduously to revive the neglected theosophy of the *Bhāgavata*.....his ardent exertions to break through the trammels of caste and the despotic influence of the Indian hierarchy served but to create a system of gloomy mysticism."[15] Mitra was wrong in thinking that the theosophy of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* was neglected in Caitanya's time. But he was the earliest Bengali historian to discover the relation of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism with Sūfism, which he regarded as an Indian religion. On *Caitanyacandrodaya,* however, his opinion was highly critical because, in his view, it was not designed to promote "the highest objects of social improvement."[16]

11. Published in the *Calcutta Review* in 1872 and 1874.
12. "Caitanya", *Bengal Magazine,* Sept., 1872, pp. 49-59.
13. Second edition by Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāya Duṣprāpya Granthamālā-10, Ranjan Publishing House, Calcutta, B.S. 1358 (1951).
14. Ibid., p. 14.
15. Intro., p. I.
16. Intro., pp. XIV-XV.

Prasāddās Mallik, an influential member of the Suvarṇavaṇik community of Burrabazar, Calcutta, founded the Burrabazar Family Literary Club in 1857. It was one of the leading cultural associations of nineteenth century Calcutta. Several scholars read essays on Vaiṣṇavism and Caitanya in its sessions.[17]

No lecture on Vaiṣṇavism or Caitanya was, however, delivered in the famous Bethune Society.[18]

Bholanath Candra (1822-1910), a pupil of D. L. Richardson, published his *Travels of a Hindu* in two volumes in 1869. In Volume 1 of this work he gave a very lucid account of the Caitanya movement and its effects. Caitanya, he wrote, "is now truly appreciated by the discerning generations of the nineteenth century as a Reformer."[19] He laid special emphasis on Caitanya's struggle against the Tantrikas, his strong opposition to the caste system, and his propagation of the cause of the remarriage of Hindu widows.[20] "The innovations of Choitunya", Candra wrote, "have produced an important era in Bengal which deserves a prominent notice that history has not yet taken."[21] He coined "hurryboling" from the Bengali word *Haribol*.[22]

Almost a similar study of the Caitanya movement occurs in Shoshee Chunder Dutt's *India : Past and Present* (1884).[23] Shoshee Chunder Dutt was an uncle of Ramesh Chandra Datta (1848-1909), I.C.S., and an eminent Bengali intellectual. Caitanya's idea Shoshee Chunder described as "a new idea for Hinduism.....With the glorification of faith Chaitanya also repudiated caste." "This changed the character of Vysnubism completely, and greatly raised it in importance.....the success of his religion at the outset was almost as great as that of Buddhism under Sakya. One great concession it made to humanity was that it did not demand the re-

17. Summary of transactions in *Suvarnavanik Katha O Kirti*, by Narendranath Laha, Vol. 3, pp. 315-477.
18. Vide, Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *Bethune Society* (in Bengali) Calcutta, Vangiya Sahitya Parishad, B.S. 1367 (1960).
19. *Travels of a Hindoo*, Vol. 1, p. 29.
20. Ibid., pp. 30-31.
21. Ibid., p. 36.
22. Ibid., p. 31.
23. *India : Past and Present*, pp. 159-162.

nunciation of home and family ties.". Dutt, however, noted that the upper caste Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal followed the caste restrictions.

The adoration of Caitanya and Vaiṣṇavism was not shared by some conservative Brāhmaṇas. The *Somaprakāśa,* an influential newspaper edited by Dwarakānāth Vidyābhuṣaṇ (1819-1886), clearly expressed its disapproval of Vaiṣṇava religious ecstasy which, according to it, had created a class of parasites. The paper considered belief in the so-called *Avatāras* socially retrogressive and ethically unsound. It also described Vaiṣṇavism as an *Upadharma* or "derivative" religion.[24]

Wilson's *A Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus* was published in 1846. In 1847-1848 Akṣayakumār Datta (1820-1886) published similar sketches in the *Tattvavodhinī Patrikā* which he edited between 1843 and 1845. Later on he collected materials for a detailed study of the Indian sects. The result of his research was the monumental *Bhāratavarṣīya Upāsaka Sampradāya* (two volumes, 1870-1883). A detailed, unprejudiced and objective account of 99 Vaiṣṇava, 59 Śaiva, and 24 Śākta sects was given in these two volumes, to which Akṣayakumār added a very interesting and learned introduction. The total number of sects mentioned in the volumes was 182, whereas Wilson gave accounts of 45 sects.

VI

The sociological significance of the movement of Caitanya was explained by Jogīndranath Bhattācārya in his *Hindu Castes and Sects* (1896). Unfortunately he had a Brāhmanical bias. He was not prepared to recognise Caitanya as a "great reformer", and the cult he preached as something different from "Tantrika orgies."[25] He thought that Caitanya, who had "a statesmanlike genius", held out an "inducement" in the form of a permission to imitate Kṛṣṇa's sports.[26] But he was generous enough to admit that "of all the great teachers of the world no one has done more to popularise

24. *Benoy Ghosh* : *Sāmayika Patre Bānglār Samājacitra,* Vol. 4, pp. 220-222.
25. *Hindu Castes and Sects* (ed. 1968), p. 365.
26. Ibid., p. 366.

religion than Caitanya." He concluded that "the inevitable result of Vishnuvite teachings is.....to cause a relaxation of the fetters by which the noble religion of the primitive Hindu Rishis sought to enforce sexual fidelity."[27] Max Weber describes Jogindranath as "an upper pandit, loyal adherent of the English dominion and the caste order, and hater of plebeian *gurus*."[28]

There was a distinct change in the Brāhmanical evaluation of the Caitanya movement towards the beginning of the twentieth century when "Bengali nationalism" grew very strong. Caitanya and the Caitanya movement were glorified by the ideologues of the racial glory of the Bengalis. One of them was a powerful writer and journalist named Pāṅckaḍi Bandyopādhyāya (1866-1923). He made some noteworthy pronouncements which are summed up below.

Pāṅckaḍi Bandyopādhyāya regarded Caitanya's religious creed as an inalienable part of the racial culture of Bengal.[29] *Kīrtana* in Bengal was far above caste prejudice.[30] The *Ākhara* in *Kīrtana* was a Bengali speciality which is not found in the devotionals of the other regions of India.[31] Jayadeva and his wife probably belonged to the *Kinnara* caste, the male and female members of which were professional singers.[32] Caitanya's fundamental aim was to remove the defects of the social organisation in Bengal.[33] Nityānanda and his descendants totally disregarded the *Smārta* restriction of the Brāhmaṇical rights, and particularly the taboo on Brāhmanical fraternisation with the Śūdras. Nityānanda was decidedly a Tāntrika. He was converted into Vaiṣṇavism by Caitanya.[34] Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was the sublimation of the Sahajiyā doctrine of love. The Sahajiyā doctrine formed the basis of Caitanya's creed.[35] Cai-

27. Ibid., p. 160.
28. Weber, *The Religion of India,* (1862 ed.), p. 386, note 60.
29. *Panckadi Bandyopadhyayer Racanavali* (ed. Bandyopadhyaya and Das), 3rd. ed. 1963, Vol. 1, pp. 7-8.
30. Ibid., p. 12.
31. Ibid., p. 12.
32. Ibid., p. 20. It was believed that Jayadeva began a movement against the caste system. Bholanath Chunder, op. cit., Vol. 1; J. Talboys Wheeler's introduction, p. xvi.
33. Ibid., p. 25.
34. Ibid., p. 28.
35. Ibid., pp. 36-37, 54.

tanya and Nityānanda converted the disciples of the Bengali Buddhist *Siddhācāryas*.[36] Nityānanda was very kind towards the socially ostracized people. He converted them, and thus caused their social rehabilitation.[37] The Caitanya movement brought about an understanding between the Hindus and the Mussalmans of Bengal.[38]

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was very much influenced by the emotional content in Durgā worship.[39] Pānckaḍi paid a handsome tribute to the poor Vaiṣṇava mendicants and described their plight in the fast changing society of Bengal in moving language.[40] His thesis was that the rejuvenation of Bengali culture would be really possible only in Śākta and Vaiṣṇava religious renaissance, in which the angularities of each of these national creeds would be removed by happy syncretism. According to him both Kesav Chandra Sen and Śiśir Kumar Ghosh dreamt of such a syncretic religious renaissance.[41] Nityānanda was the father of Śākta-Vaiṣṇava syncretism in Bengal. He brought about a compromise between the Vaiṣṇavas and the Tāntrikas. This compromise had a far reaching social effect.[42] Bandyopādhyāya supported the view of Nagendranāth Basu, stated in *Modern Buddhism in Orissa* (1911), that Caitanya's Vaiṣṇavism was Hīnayāna Buddhism with a Vaiṣṇava garb. This transformed Buddhism lent cohesiveness to Bengali society.[43] Lastly, he described Mahatma Gandhi as a "great Vaiṣṇava."[44]

The views of Pānckaḍi Bandyopādhyāya make it clear that as

36. Ibid., p. 52.
37. Ibid., p. 64.
38. Ibid., p. 198.
39. Ibid., p. 313.
40. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 163-167.
41. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 128-135, 186-188, 283.
42. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 276.
43. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 282. The latest proponent of the theory of the Buddhist origin of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is Kṛṣṇacaitanya Thākur. By an analysis of the CCM he tries to show that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja merely stated Sahajiyā Buddhist theories with a thin Vaiṣṇava garb. Vide Kṛṣṇacaitanya Thākur, *Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja O Śrī Caitanyacaritāmṛta* (in two parts) (B.S. 1378-79/1971-1972). Kṛṣṇacaitanya Thākura is a disciple of Rāmadāsa Bābāji, author of *Caritasudhā*.
44. Pānckaḍi Bandyopādhyāya, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 375.

the nationalist ferment in Bengal grew stronger and stronger, the upper caste debunking of Vaiṣṇavism and the Caitanya movement became more and more unfashionable. Caitanya and his creed became respectable in the estimation of those upper caste Bengalis who propagated the possibility of a purely 'Bengali' nationalist revival.

VII

Bankimcandra Cattopādhyāya (1838-1894) and Navincandra Sen (1847-1909) interpreted ancient Indian history and suggested the future prospects of India in terms of Vaiṣṇava idealism.

Bankimcandra's deep acquaintance with Vaiṣṇavism and Vaiṣṇava lyrics is manifest in many of his novels. In *Durgeśanandinī* (1865) a fool named Gajapati Vidyādiggaja takes himself for Kṛṣṇa, and regards a Muslim lady named Āsmānī as Rādhā.[45] A mendicant *Boṣṭami* named Girijāyā sings many Vaiṣṇava songs in *Mṛnālinī* (1869). Girijāyā is depicted as a mysterious figure. Haridāsī Vaiṣṇavī is a key figure in the celebrated novel *Viṣavṛkṣa* (1873). She is an expert singer.[46] In the same novel there is a reference to mural paintings of Kṛṣṇa and his queens.[47] In *Indirā* (1873) a young and sprightly girl sings a Vaiṣṇava song to entertain her sister and brother-in-law.[48] Popular Vaiṣṇava songs are quoted in *Chandraśekhara* (1875)[49] A Vaiṣṇava song, which is composed in Hindi, is quoted in *Rājasiṃha* (1882).[50]

Bankimcandra's *Ānandamath* may be described as a "Vaiṣṇava" political novel, since its principal characters are Vaiṣṇava *gosvāmins*. These *gosvāmins,* however, did not belong to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order, though they sang songs of the *Gītagovinda.* Satyānanda Gosvāmin, their leader, said that Vaiṣṇavism in the real sense of the term meant the suppression of roguery and

45. *Bankim Racanāvalī,* ed. Jogesh Chandra Bāgal, Sāhityasaṃsad ed. B.S. 1363/1956, Vol. 1, p. 70.
46. Ibid., pp. 273, 285.
47. Ibid., p. 333.
48. Ibid., p. 382.
49. Ibid., pp. 404, 466.
50. Ibid., p. 647.

the redemption of the world. Caitanya's Vaiṣṇavism, with its emphasis on love, was not Vaiṣṇavism in the real sense of the term. Real Vaiṣṇavism was a combination of love, and strength spiritual and physical.[51] The *gosvāmins* of *Ānandamath* are described as great patriots and valiant freedom fighters who had renounced the world with the sacred purpose of liberating their motherland from the *Yavana* yoke.

Bankim's attitude towards Caitanya and his movement was ambivalent. He appreciated Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava indifference to caste.[52] He thought that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa was but the worship of a symbol.[53] To the Caitanya movement he ascribed the dawn of a great literary renaissance.[54] His interpretation of 'Prīti' or Friendship was influenced by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ideology.[55] But yet in *Ānandamath* he expressed his preference for 'heroic' Vaiṣṇavism, which is considered insignificant by the followers of Caitanya.

Bipincandra Pal (1855-1932) opined that "Bankimcandra's story of Shree Krishna followed the main canons of modern scriptural and historical criticism..... Bankimchandra really followed the lead of Renan whose life of Jesus Christ had been at one time a favourite study with members of the Brahma Samaj"[56]

A sober analysis of Bankimcandra's *Kṛṣṇacaritra* (1886) would lead to the conclusion that only a fixed, single idea has been relentlessly pursued in it, and that facts and data have either been rejected or accepted or interpreted in strict, unvarying accordance with the fixed, single idea. Bankimcandra thought-and his thought is supposed to have been very much influenced by English Utilitarianism and French Positivism—that Kṛṣṇa was the greatest, and the ideal 'Man' in world history. Any evidence leading to the

51. Ibid., p. 750.
52. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 269.
53. Ibid., p. 269.
54. Ibid., pp. 339, 905-906.
55. T. W. Clark, "The Role of Bankimchandra in the Development of Nationalism", *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, ed. C. Phillips, London, Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 432-435.
56. B. C. Pal, *Beginnings of Freedom Movement in Modern India*, Calcutta, 1959, p. 52.

contradiction of this idea he mercilessly rejected or belittled. He merely examined the *Puranic* evidence without ever trying to study it in the context of ancient traditions as recorded in ancient literature, archaeology and arts. In the name of objective analysis he often indulged in irrational fancies. Bankimcandra committed the blunder of explaining pure legends, myths, fables, and traditions in a 'rational' manner, without trying to consider them as simple myths, legends, fables and traditions.

In his essay on *Draupadī* he interpreted polyandry and Kṛṣṇa's polygamy as practical illustrations of the *Sāmkhya* concept of *Nirlepa* or detachment.[57] The legend of Kṛṣṇa's erotic sports in Vṛndāvana was regarded by him as an example of the theory of the cultivation of that particular trait "that gladdens the heart."[58] Kṛṣṇa once stole the garments of bathing milkmaids. In this naughty tale Bankim discerned the enunciation of the theory of devotion.[59] Bankimcandra might have been unconsciously following an ancient tradition of attributing spiritual meaning to what is apparently erotic.[60]

While Bankimcandra attached a spiritual meaning to Kṛṣṇa's sports, Jayadeva's brilliant narration of the same sports he describes as "the great festival of Cupid."[61] The legend of the killing of Putanā by Kṛṣṇa, the suckling baby, was interpreted by him as nothing but an attack of blue funk which almost all human babies experience at one time or another. The destruction of the demon Tṛṇāvarta by boy Kṛṣṇa was, according to him, a fable made out of a severe whirlwind.[62]

It must, however, be pointed out that Bankimcandra saw no reason for extolling the virtues of *Bhakti*-ecstasy and 'Divine Love' at a time when India lay prostrate under the heels of the British imperialists. Kṛṣṇa, Bankimcandra's 'ideal man', was a strong-willed

57. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 197-200.
58. It is called *Cittaranjanīvṛtti*. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 458.
59. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 462-463.
60. The coitus of Sundara and Vidyā, for instance, (as described by Bhāratcandra in *Vidyāsundar Kāvya*), had a *Kālipakṣa* or Tāntrika symbolical meaning.
61. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 189f., 906, also. p. 464.
62. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 449.

warrior, a champion of *Dharma* (in the Brāhmanical sense of the term), who did not tolerate any weakness of the body or mind. Bankimcandra felt that India in bondage could once again become independent if she revived the heroic traditions of Kṛṣṇa, the mighty warrior, the brilliant statesman, the champion of the down-trodden, the enemy of the enemies of mankind, the proponent of 'disinterested action', the architect of an ethical, well-regulated, well-coordinated order. Kṛṣṇa, the flute-playing lover of the milkmaids, had no relevance in a society in doldrums, in a state which was no longer independent. He did not denigrate *bhakti*. He proposed that the object of *bhakti* should be the adoration of Kṛṣṇa, the ideal man of action, the universal figure, the symbol of a cosmic struggle against the forces of disorder and tyranny.

VIII

Navīncandra Sen, who was a Deputy Magistrate like Bankimcandra, developed the idea of a heroic and philosophic Kṛṣṇa while he was once staying in Puri.[63] He thought that Kṛṣṇa of the *Mahābhārata* was a great man, because he was able to unify India and establish "the Great Indian Empire." The ethical basis of that empire was the theory of 'disinterested action' which was postulated in the *Gītā*.[64]

According to him both the Buddha and Kṛṣṇa rejected caste and thus laid the foundation of the Indian brand of socialism. Buddhism was but 'transformed' Vaiṣṇavism.[65]

The story of Kṛṣṇa, the founder and organiser of the socialistic *Mahābhārata,* or Great India, was the subject of Navīncandra's trilogy, *Raivataka,* (1889), *Kurkṣetra* (1893) and *Prabhāsa* (1896). The poet also wrote a *Kāvya* on Caitanya in twelve cantos, entitled *Amṛtābha.* Navīncandra at first requested Bankimcandra to write a 'philosophical' history of India. Bankimcandra expressed his inability to write it on the ground of his "lack of scholarship".[66]

63. Navīncandra Sen *Āmār Jīvan,* Part 1, Vols. 2, 3 and 4, ed. Sajanīkānta Dās, p. 458.
64. Ibid., p. 460.
65. Ibid., p. 460.
66. Ibid., pp. 461-62.

Later the poet sent the great novelist his schemes of the three *Kāvyas*. On receipt of these schemes Bankimcandra wrote : "If executed adequately, many will probably consider it as the *Mahābhārata* of the nineteenth century."[67] But Bankimcandra could not support the poet's "socialistic" interpretation of the Kṛṣṇa legend. He wrote : "Now I believe that it is not historically true, either that Kṛṣṇa set himself against Brahmanical authority (there was never a greater champion of it) or that the Brahmanas ever coalesced with the non-Aryans in order to put down the Ksatriyas."[68] Bankimcandra also wrote : "Kṛṣṇa preached, if he preached anything, devotion to the Brahmanas. It is against all tradition and written knowledge to set him up against the Brahmanas."[69]

Navīncandra, however, could not accept this conservative interpretation of the Kṛṣṇa legend. He stated the following reasons for describing Kṛṣṇa in his trilogy as a leader of the down-trodden Śūdras :[70]

1. According to the legend of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* Kṛṣṇa, even in his boyhood, had repudiated the ceremonial *Yajna,* and preached the philosophy of *Karma.*
2. The Brāhmaṇa priests were so angry with Kṛṣṇa that they refused to give him any food even when he was once terribly hungry.
3. Kṛṣṇa and his Kṣatriya friends, the Pāṇḍavas, once humiliated Durvāsā, an ever angry Brāhmaṇa sage.
4. A Brāhmaṇa sage named Bhṛgu once gave Kṛṣṇa a terrific kick on his breast.
5. The logical conclusion is that a powerful section of the Brāhmaṇas somehow became the unrelenting enemies of Kṛṣṇa. These Brāhmaṇas formed a league with the uncivilised non-Aryans, and ultimately effected the total destruction of Kṛṣṇa and his family.

Navīncandra described the non-violent and vegetarian Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal as a branch of Mahāyāna Buddhism.[71]

67. Ibid., p. 462.
68. Ibid., p. 463.
69. Ibid., p. 464.
70. Ibid., pp. 464-65.
71. Ibid., p. 15.

The best description of Navīncandra's Kṛṣṇa is found in the following review of *Raivataka* by the eminent Bengali philosopher, Brajendra Nāth Śīl :[72]

> The grandeur of the situation fails description. A dim prehistoric vista-a hundred surging peoples and mighty kingdoms, in that dim light clashing and warring with one another like emblematic dragons and crocodiles and griffins on some Afric shore-a dark polytheistic creed and inhuman polytheistic rites-the astute Brāhmin priest fomenting eternal disunion by planting-distinctions of caste, of creed and of political government on the basis of Vedic revelation.....the wily Brahmin priests jealous of Ksatriya ascendancy, entering into an unholy compact with the non-Aryan Naga and Dashyu hordes, and adopting into the Hindu pantheon the Asuric Gods of the latter.....and in the foreground the figure of the half-divine legislator Kṛṣṇa, whom Viṣṇu, the Lord of the Universe, guides through mysterious visions and phantasms-unfurling in the fulness of his destiny, the flag of the universal religion of Baishnavism to hurl down the Brahmanic priesthood and their cruel Vedic ritualism and to establish in their place the Kingdom of God in Mahābhārata, one vast Indian empire, a realised universal human brotherhood, embracing Aryan and Non-Aryan in bonds of religious, social and political unity, a grand design, scenic pomp, an antique as well as modern significance like this what national epic can show ?

In fact Navīncandra used poetic licence to describe Kṛṣṇa as a *doppelganger* of Viṣṇu, the cosmic God. Kṛṣṇa's 'socialism' ultimately meant the establishment of the supremacy of the Kṣatriya caste over all other castes. Kṛṣṇa miserably failed to gain the support of the non-Aryan tribes, whose gullibility was misused by the scheming Brāhmanical devils. Kṛṣṇa's caste-politics led to the alienation of the Brāhmaṇas. He utterly failed to extinguish the fires of internal disruption. Despite the high-sounding philosophy ascribed to him, Kṛṣṇa is painted in the three "epic" poems of Navīncandra as a Kṣatriya imperialist of low calibre.

72. Śīl's review quoted by Navīncandra, op. cit., pp. 474-475.

It may be noted in this connection that Ramāprasād Chanda propounded the theory of the two phases of the Vāsudeva cult, namely, the Brāhmanical phase, and the Ābhīra (Saurāṣtra) phase. The *Bhāgavata* tradition was connected with the Brāhmaṇical phase, and the *Pāncarātra* tradition had some link with the non-Brāhmaṇa, Ābhīra phase.[73] Canda analysed the un-Vedic characteristics of Vaiṣṇavism. He wrote : "Professor Garbe's view that Kṛṣṇaism or Vāsudevism in its original form lay outside the pale of Brāhmanism is historically correct."[74] According to Bimanbihari Majumdar Chanda's theory "suffers from two defects. First, the Pāncaratra school cannot be regarded as a religion of the barbarian Ābhīras and Sauraṣtras. The Gopas of the Mathura region can hardly be identified with the Ābhīras." Majumdar's opinion is shared by Sudhākar Chattopādhyāya.[75] "Secondly", says Majumdar, "the traditions recorded in the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Purāṇas* do not anywhere hint at the worship of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva as God.....In the absence of any tradition of the worship of Kṛṣṇa by the Yādavas how can we accept the theory that Kṛṣṇa was at first a tribal God ?"[76]

One may, however, conclude that Navīncandra's theory of the un-Brahmanical or better, anti-Brāhmanical nature of Kṛṣṇa might have lent a new dimension to the Kṛṣṇa legend and made at least a few Bengali scholars like Ramāprasād Chanda and Hem Chandra Raychaudhuri conscious of the new possibilities of the legend.

IX

The ideas of Bankimcandra and Navīncandra, two patriotic Deputy Magistrates, deeply inspired the later freedom fighters. Bipincandra Pal wrote : "Shree Kṛṣṇa represents the ideal of the Indian type of humanity. Historically, he has been the supreme teacher of our people. He has given us the highest philosophy of both our individual and composite social life. In his life and tea-

73. R. P. Chanda, *Archaeology and Vaiṣṇava Tradition*, Memoir of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 5, 1.
74. R. P. Chanda, *The Indo-Aryan Races*, p. 52 ; pp. 53-54.
75. *Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend*, pp. 53-54 ; Sudhākar Chattopādhyāya, *The Evolution of the Theistic Sects in Ancient India*, p. 97.
76. *Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend*, pp. 53-54.

chings India has found the master-key to the secrets of nation-building, and a rational synthesis of all her outer differences and conflicts.[77] Pal also wrote : "The soul of Europe and America is Christ : the soul of India is, in the same way, Shree Kṛṣṇa."[78] He found in Vaiṣṇavism "a more thorough, more concrete, at once more real and more ideal presentation of the universal than perhaps we have in any other culture." He believed that the spiritual and the universal values in the Indo-Aryan racial consciousness are loftily expressed in Vaiṣṇavism.[79]

Bipincandra Pal was once a Brāhma. He was opposed to the ideals of the Congress, because "the general body of the Brahmos .....were grateful to Providence for the establishment of the new political power in the country, which was regarded by them, in those days, as a great moral influence....the Brahmos of those days were frankly afraid of a return to Hindu or Moslem rule in India."[80] Later he became a disciple of Vijayakṛṣṇa Gosvāmī. He was reguarded as a trouble maker and an extremist by the British police.[81] Among other causes, his 'renunciation' of the Brāhma cult might have transformed him into an extremist.[82] He became a Vaiṣṇava, and tried to give a Vaiṣṇava explanation of the Hegelian theory of consciousness. He wrote : "The logic of our sense-experience drives us to the irresistable conclusion of the Eternal and universal consciousness. This universal consciousness or Shree Bhagavan or Shree Krishna of the Bengal Vaiṣṇava cult is the root and realisation of all our sense-life and sense activity....This is a postulate that stands behind the very definition of *Bhakti* as the worship or the service of the Lord through the senses."[83] Pal also appreciated the social effects of the Vaiṣṇava movement. He was of opinion

77. B. C. Pal, *Shree Krishna,* pp. 7-8.
78. B. C. Pal, *Soul of India,* (1911), "Author's Apologia".
79. Ibid., p. 224.
80. R. C. Majumdar, A. K. Majumdar, D. K. Ghose, ed. *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance* (Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965), Part II, p. 545.
81. James Campbell Ker, *Political Trouble in India : A Confidential Report* (first ed. 1917, second ed. 1973, Oriental Publishers, Delhi), pp. 11-13 ; 432-433.
82. He was also influenced by Bankimcandra's ideal of the 'Mother'. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism,* p. 36.
83. Pal, *Bengal Vaisnavism,* pp. 50-51.

that the Caitanya movement had brought about the uplift of the Bengali masses.[84]

X

There were other admireres of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya who had not the power to conjure up the vision of Kṛṣṇa as the ideal, cosmic figure, or as the great Kṣatriya imperialist. Kṛṣṇaprasanna Sen, a self-styled preacher, tried to prove the superiority of Hinduism by "using pun on the words 'GOD' in English.....and "NANDA-NANDANA" (meaning, Kṛṣṇa) in Sanskrit and Bengali.....If you reversed the alphabets composing the word 'GOD' you would find it converted into 'DOG' ; if you reversed the letters "NANDANAN-DANA", you would find no change in it".[85]

Śaśadhar Tarkacuḍāmaṇi (1851-1928), a high priest of neo-Hindiusm, an 'upper Paṇḍita', put forth the hypothesis that Kṛṣṇa was, very much like Caitanya, a human being to whom divinity was attributed by his followers.[86]

Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa (1836-1886) was a votary of Kālī He learnt Vedānta from a wandering ascetic named Totā Purī, and later preached syncretism. His veneration for both Christ and Kālī was very deep. His respect for Caitanya, Advaita and Nityānanda was also very great. He participated in Vaiṣṇava festivals. He was also an expert *Ākhariyā,* or a singer of the *Padāvalīkīrtana* who knew how to add *Ākhara*-sentences to the original wording of the *Padāvalī*. He came into contact with the Kartābhajā, and knew of their secrets. It is said that Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa was regarded as the best of the Vaiṣṇavas by Bhagavān Dās Bābājī of Kālnā who acted as a sort of general superintendent of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order in Bengal.[87]

It is also said that the celebrated Paramahaṃsa experienced the

84. Ibid., pp. 119-120.
85. B. C. Pal, *Memory of My Life and Times* (Calcutta 1951), II, pp. 438-39.
86. Śaśadhar Tarkacuḍāmaṇi, "Amār Kṛṣṇa", *Sārathi* (ed. Amarendranāth Ray, published by Sāhitya Bhāṇḍār, Calcutta), Year I : B. S. 1327-28 (1920-21), pp. 121, 148, 227, 673.
87. Some orthodox Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas hated the Paramahaṃsa's eclecticism. They made very uncharitable remarks about his spiritual culture. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, Vol. 2, 1885, pp. 111-113.

indescribable ecstasy of the milkmaids of Vṛndāvana, and that he regarded himself as one of them. He wore the robe and ornaments of a damsel in love with Kṛṣṇa. At last, in the words of Swāmī Nirvedānanda, one of his biographers, "the curtain suddenly rose, Shri Krishna with his soul-enthralling grace appeared, walked up to him, and merged in his person."[88] We are apparently required to believe it.

Swāmī Vivekananda (1863-1902), Rāmakṛṣṇa's chief disciple, considered the love of the milkmaids as something too lofty to be realized by 'fools'.[89] The Vṛndāvana legend, couched in music, struck a chord in the musical bent of his mind. His mission consisted in preaching the glories of Hinduism. He could not, therefore, agree with those who regarded Vaiṣṇavism as a sex-cult. "Vivekānanda", says a modern historian, "brushed the cobwebs of sentiment aside to reveal the elements of eternal verity, beauty, and good in it.".[90] But Vivekānanda's exposition of the legend of the milkmaids was purely sentimental. He wrote :

> ".....the love of the gopīs ! that is the very essence of Krishna Incarnation. Even the Gītā, the great philosophy itself, does not compare with that madness..... here is the madness of enjoyment, the drunkenness of love, where disciples and teachers and teachings and books and all those things have become one.....what remains is the madness of love."[91]

Vivekānanda explained the spiritual significance of *bhakti* in *Bhaktiyoga*. His interpretation is derived from the Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Vedāntasūtra*. Vivekānanda thought that at a certain point *jṇāna* and *bhakti* were non-dual.[92] He denounced *Gauṇībhakti* or "Secondary Devotion", which leads to orthodoxy, untouchability, ritualism and moral degeneration.[93] He once opined

88. *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. 3, p. 259.
89. *The Complete Works of Swāmī Vivekānanda*, Vol. 3, p. 259.
90. N. K. Sinha (ed.) *History of Bengal* (Calcutta University, 1967), p. 503.
91. *The Complete Works of Swāmī Vivekānanda*, Vol. 3, p. 259.
92. *Bhaktiyoga* (in Bengali), pp. 5-6.
93. Ibid., pp. 5-7, 54-55.

that despite its innate sublimity *bhakti* emotionalism would delay or block the material progress of India.[94]

XI

The balanced Brāhma view of Vaiṣṇavism, derived from research, is to be found in the admirable accounts of Akṣayakumār Datta. It seems that the balanced estimate of Datta was not shared by Devendranāth Tagore (1817-1905), Rabīndranāth's father. In a report submitted to the Brāhma Samāj in 1853 Devendranāth presented a highly critical view of the Vaiṣṇava disregard of caste differences.[95] The Vaiṣṇava's flouting of caste had, according to him, done much harm to the society. He later wrote in a letter to Rājnārāyaṇ Basu (1826-1899) that eradication of caste was not the aim of the Brāhma movement.[96] But like Rammohun he, too, was not opposed to *bhakti*.[97] Devendranāth's eldest son Dwijendranāth Tagore (1840-1926) took the Vaiṣṇavas to task for neglecting *jṇāna* and extolling *bhakti* to the skies. He put considerable stress on the necessity of combining *bhakti* with *jṇāna*. He was of opinion that sober *jṇāna* must act as the guardian of eccentric *bhakti*. Without the support of *jṇāna, bhakti* in Vaiṣṇavism had become merely unmitigated dissipation.[98]

Towards the end of his long life Dwijendranāth underscored the importance of assessing the value of the Kṛṣṇa legend from the historical point of view. He supported the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theory of the non-duality of the Kṛṣṇa of Vṛndāvana and the Kṛṣṇa of Mathurā. Obviously he was influenced by the theories of Navīncandra Sen. He thought that Kṛṣṇa led a rebellion of the Ābhīra cowherds against the tyranny of the Kṣatriya kings, who tried their

94. *Pāncakaḍi Bandhypādhyāyer Racanāvalī*, Vol. 2, p. 59.
95. *Brāhma Samājer Pancavimśati Vatsarer Parikṣita Vṛttānta*, pp. 42-43. Quoted in *Sāhitya Sādhak Caritamālā*-45, Vol. 3, pp. 110-112.
96. *Sāhitya Sādhaka Caritamālā*, Vol. 3, *"Patrāvalī"*, p. 227 (dated Māgha 15, 1853).
97. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, Vol. 2, 1885, pp. 55-56 commented that the *bhakti* content in Devendranāth's speeches made it apparent that Brahmaism and Vaiṣṇavism would soon coalesce.
98. *Āryadharma O Bauddadharma Prasārer Ghātpratighāt* (June 15, 1899), pp. 80, 102. These views were criticized in *Sajjanatoṣaṇī*, January, 1900, No. 10, pp. 14-21.

utmost to assassinate him. Kṛṣṇa, however, was the leader of a big party of rebels. The Kṣatriyas and the Brāhmaṇas formed a league against him and then tried to assassinate his character. They depicted him as a womanizer and a pervert. But their mud-throwing produced no result. Kṛṣṇa's role was very much like that of the Duke of Orleans during the French Revolution. Were Kṛṣṇa a Casanova, it would have been impossible for him to cut off his links with Vṛndāvana at the call of sacred duty. Later the people of Vṛndāvana requested him to return to the beautiful bowers. Had Kṛṣṇa been a dissolute libertine the people of Vṛndāvana, would never have made that request.[99]

Kṛṣṇa also paved the way for the Buddha incarnation. Later even his class enemies recognized his importance and began to honour him as a God. A man of the people, Kṛṣṇa laid emphasis on *bhakti,* and simplified the rituals according to the *bhakti*-principle so that ordinary people might be able to follow his ideal of social equality.[1]

Devendranāth Tagore's respect for caste differences was not shared by his son Jyotirindranāth Tagore (1849-1925), who wrote that it was not an essential duty for the genuine Hindu to observe caste rules. According to him Caitanya, who was decidedly a Hindu, violated no social law when he converted Haridāsa, a Muhammadan. He wished the re-birth of great man like Caitanya with the mission of flushing out caste distinctions.[2]

The most trenchant criticism of Caitanya was made by a Brāhma intellectual and bureaucrat named Umeshchandra Batabyāl (1852-1898). He belonged to a Śākta family of Rāmanagar village near Khānākul-Kṛṣṇanagar in Hooghly. He wrote the following articles on Caitanya and Vaiṣṇavism :

"Rūpa O Sanatan Gosvāmi"	*Navyabhārat,*	Bhādra	B.S. 1301 (1894)
"Jiva Gosvāmī"	*Bhāratī*	Agrahāyaṇa	B.S. 1301

99. These very interesting views were recorded by Bipinbihārī Gupta in *Purātan Prasanga* (ed. B.S. 1373/1966), pp. 289-292.
1. Ibid., p. 291.
2. *Sāhitya Sādhaka Caritamālā,* Vol. 6, pp. 66-67.

"Caṇḍīdāser Kavitār Āsvādan"	Ibid	Kārtika Agrahāyaṇa	B.S. 1303 B.S. 1302	(1896) (1895)
"Gaurānga Mahāprabhu"	*Sāhitya*	Jyaiṣtha	B.S. 1303	
"Gaurānger Vālyajīvan	Ibid	Śrāvaṇa	B.S. 1303	
"Gaurānger Pathaddaśā"	Ibid	Agrahāyaṇa-		
"Gaurāngacarit"	Ibid	Pauṣa	B.S. 1303	
"Bānglādeśe Vaiṣṇav Dharma"	Ibid	Agrahāyaṇa	B.S. 1306	(1899)
"Bāul Sampradāer Ādi"	Ibid	Vaiśākha	B.S. 1308	(1901)
"Mādhavendra Purī O Iśvara Purī"	Ibid	Caitra	B.S. 1308	
"Gaurānger Mantradikṣā"	Ibid	Āsāḍa	B.S. 1309	(1902)
"Bauddha O Vaiṣṇava"	Ibid	Kārttika	B.S. 1309	

The noted literary journal *Sāhitya* was edited by Sureshcandra Samājapati, Īśvarcandra Vidyāsāgar's grandson, and a champion of cultural orthodoxy. That Umeshcandra's articles against Vaiṣṇavism and Caitanya were published in this journal was really significant. Umeshcandra did not discover any new fact, or state any meaningful and new hypothesis. According to him Caitanya was a happy handsome who had little learning, who was half insane, and who knew the art of living on charity.[3] He asked the contemporary young men to think twice before they married, because they might have to live on charity like him after he had married a girl in a huff![4] He regarded Vaiṣṇava poetry as the unabashed expression of libido.[5] He tried to show a connection between decadent Buddhism and Caitanya's creed. Rādhā, according to him, might have been originally an immoral Buddhist nun, who was given the verisimilitude of divinity in the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*.[6] The Buddhist monks and nuns practised Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā religion of sexual promiscuity.[7]

3. *Sāhitya*, 1303, pp. 109-115, 206, 209-210, 465 (fn.), 536-538.
4. Ibid., pp. 536-538.
5. *Sāhitya*, 1306, p. 465.
6. *Sāhitya*, 1306, *"Bānglā Deśe Vaiṣṇava Dharma"*, pp. 461-468.
7. Ibid., p. 466.

These theories were characterized by a profound hatred of Vaiṣṇavism and the Vaiṣṇavas. Rāmendrasundar Trivedī (1864-1919) later wrote that Batabyāl's language was really scurrilous. But he was of opinion that Batabyāl only criticized the effusion of *Bhakti,* only idle emotionalism, which destroyed the impetus for constructive work.[8]

The adoration of "god-maddened" Caitanya and *Kīrtana* were the characteristic features of the circle led by the great Brāhma leader Keśavcandra Sen (1838-1884). He belonged to an old Vaiṣṇava family of Garifā. Sen commissioned Trailokyanāth Sānyal (d. 1916), *alias* Ciranjīva Śarmā, to prepare a text on *bhakti* and the ideas of Caitanya. The result of the endeavour was a book in two parts, entitled *Bhakticaitanyacandrikā.* Ciranjīva Śarmā was a famous singer. He composed some songs on Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana sports and the *līlā* of Caitanya.[9] The *Navavidhāna* organization of Keśavcandra Sen published in 1889 a dissertation on Kṛṣṇa entitled, *Śrīkṛṣṇer Jīvan O Dharma.* It dealt with the philosophy of the *Gītā* in accordance with the religious views of Keśavcandra Sen. Keśavcandra himself expressed his deep veneration for Caitanya in a work entitled *Jīvanaveda.*[10] His "Vaiṣṇavism" was disliked by Devendranāth Tagore.[11] The 'un-Vaiṣṇava' Brāhmas might have found it difficult to tolerate the *bhakti*-ecstasy of Keśavcandra and his followers. This was probably one of the reasons behind the split in the Brāhma movement. Devendranāth and his followers did not like to shed their tears in *Kīrtanas.* Keśav also adopted the Vaiṣṇava technique of *Nagarakīrtana* or leading *Kīrtana* processions in the streets of North Calcutta.

Vijaykṛṣṇa Gosvāmī (1841-1899) was a prominent Brāhma preacher and social reformer. Gradually he detached himself from the Brāhma movement and became a Vaiṣṇava *guru.* Vijaykṛṣṇa

8. Opinion quoted in *Sāhitya Sādhaka Caritamālā,* Vol. 8, p. 23. See "Umeśacandra Batabyāl" in *Rāmendra Racanāsaṃgraha,* ed. Buddhadev Bhattācārya, Vol, I, pp. 223-231.
9. *Bangālīr Gān,* pp. 839-847.
10. *Jīvanaveda,* January, 1883, pp. 27-30; Pratāpcandra Majumdār, *The Life and Teachings of Keśabcandra Sen,* p. 132.
11. Devendranāth's letter to Rājnārayaṇ Basu, quoted in *Sāhitya Sādhaka Caritamālā.* Vol. 3, pp. 78-81. This letter was published in *Tattvavodhinī Patrikā, Āśvina,* 1881.

was an "eclectic" Vaiṣṇava. He was a friend of the Vṛndāvana Gosvamins, the *Nāgā* ascetics of the mountains, the Muhammadan *Fakirs,* the Bāuls, the Tāntrika mystics, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Bābājīs of the *Ākhdās,* the Christian Salvation Army, the Brāhmas, and the Brāhmaṇical priests. With so many and such varied links Vijayakṛṣṇa was certainly an uncommon Vaiṣṇava. His *guru* was one Brahmānanda Svāmin who was almost as old as Methuselah, and who lived in the unexplorable regions of the mystic *Mānasasarovara* in the Himālayas.[12] It is interesting to note that his views on caste were similar to those of Kedārnāth Datta. According to him there were only three castes in accordance with the three qualities of *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.*[13] Most of the disciples of the Gosvāmin were householders like Aśvinīkumār Datta (1856-1923), Monoranjan Guhathākurtā, Bipincandra Pāl (1858-1932), and Svarṇakumārī Devi (1858-1932). Some of them were ascetics like Satishcandra Mukhopādhyāya, Kiraṇcānd Darbesh (b. 1878) and Kuladānanda Brahmacārī (1867-1930). The following is an example of Vijayakṛṣṇa's advice to Kuladānanda Brahmacārī :[14]

> "You say you want to give up eating. You are young. If you now try to live without eating, you will certainly be able to live without eating. But you can't give it up all at once. You must slowly practise starvation. Firstly, you will have to fix the quantity of your rice. You will eat your rice only with another item. You eat your rice either with pulse-juice, or with vegetable curry. When you will have developed the habit of eating this diet, you will slowly give up either the pulse-juice or the vegetable curry, and eat only rice with boiled pulse, or boiled vegetable. At this time you may also take some milk or *ghi.* But you better give up milk. Gradually you diminish the

12. Vijayakṛṣṇa Gosvāmī's ideas were recorded by Kuladānanda Brahmacārī in *Śrī Śrī Sadgurusanga* (5 Volumes). The latest biography of Vijayakṛṣṇa is *Sadguru Śrī Vijayakṛṣṇa,* Calcutta, 1973, by Tāriṇī Caraṇ Chaudhurī. A thousand statements of Vijayakṛṣṇa have been quoted in it, pp. 563-575. The mystic ideas of Vijayakṛṣṇa have been analyzed by Shovarāṇī Basu in *Some Mystics of Modern India* (Vārāṇasī, 1979, pp. 135-213).
13. *Sadguru Sanga,* Vol. 2, pp. 115-116 ; Vol. 3, p. 118.
14. Ibid., Vol. 3, pp. 65-66.

quantity of the boiled pulse or vegetable, and mix with your rice more and more water. And gradually you shall have to decrease the quantity of rice and increase that of water. At the same time you try to give up salt. If you succeed in giving up salt, you will have to eat some fruit. Next you increase the quantity of fruit and decrease that of rice. A time comes when you don't eat any rice at all. You only eat fruit and drink water.

At this stage you practise eating edible green leaves with your fruit. Gradually you increase the quantity of green leaves and decrease that of fruits. A time comes when you eat only edible green leaves and drink water.

But you must go slow with the processes I have just explained. Otherwise you will suffer from some incurable malady. But first you must surely practise the retention of semen. Everything depends on it".

The *gosvamin,* of course, never advised any householder to practise starvation in this strange manner.

XII

In many satires of the nineteenth century villains, drunkards and libertines were depicted as Vaiṣṇavas. These satires reflected the waning of the Vaiṣṇava influence in the middle class urban milieu. The educated Bengalis, most of whom were clerks, teachers and pleaders, lived in a world which was far removed from idyllic Vṛndāvana or mediaeval Navadvīpa. The typical Vaiṣṇava, with his necklace of *Tulasī* beads, single tuft of hair on the centre of his closely shaven head, and peculiar manners, roused suspicion and even disgust, which are clearly expressed in numerous satries.[15]

A young widow gets sexually responsive after she listens to songs on the sports of Kṛṣṇa. (Yadugapāl Chattopādhyāya, *Capalācittacāpalya,* 1857).

The Vaiṣṇava *guru* is a drunkard who supports the plan of some other drunkards to take up *veśa* or *bheka* in far *Vṛndāvana* (Mahendranāth Mukhopādhyāya, *Cār Yāre Tīrthayātrā,* 1858).

15. See *Samājcitre Ūnavimśa Satāvdir Bānglā Prahasan* by Jayanta Goswāmī, (Calcutta, Sāhityaśrī, B.S. 1381, 1974).

Viṣṇu was incarnated as Caitanya with the mission of flushing out the evils of the *Kālī*-age. (Nārāyaṇ Cattarāja, *Kalikautuka*, Serampore, 1858).

In *Mad Khāoār Vaḍa Dāya Jāt Thākār Ki Upāya* (Calcutta, D. Rozario & Co., 1859) Pyāricānd Mitra, *alias* Tekcānd Thākur, describes a 'vegetarian' Vaiṣṇava, who regularly eats meat and drinks wine in Wilson's Hotel. The devious Vaiṣṇava frequently visits this hotel, covering his shaven head with a piece of cloth.

In the brilliant sketches (*Nākśā*) of Hutom Pyāncā, entitled *Hutom Pyāncār Naksā* (1862), some Vaiṣṇavas are depicted as the 'fat ones', some as practitioners of *jus primae noctis*, and some others as the butt of the murderous practical joke of drunken Calcutta *Bābus*.[16] Two Vaiṣṇavas, who present a strange Lawrel-Hardy combination of excessive fat and tubercular fragility, are the principal characters of the excellent sketch on the early railway travel, which was full of hazards.[17]

Some Vaiṣṇava *Bābājīs* are depicted as lechers and conspirators in such popular novels as *Haridāser Guptakathā* (1873) by Bhuvancandra Mukhopādhyāya, and *Ei Ek Nutan* (1871-73) by Upendra Kṛṣṇa Deb.

Popular Vaiṣṇava songs were parodied by Akṣayacandra Sarkār and Kālīprasanna Bhādurī.[18] Akṣayacandra's parody describes an enlightened Kṛṣṇa of modern times. Kālīprasanna uses the language and rhyme of the *Padāvalī Kīrtana* to lend piquancy to the tale of the humiliation of a libertine.

XIII

The influence of Vaiṣṇavism is distinctly seen in the evolution of the Bengali dramatic literature of the nineteenth century. The origin of the Bengali drama may be traced to *Kṛṣṇayātrā* or the *Kāliyadamanayātrā* which will be discussed in the next Chapter. Many playwrights derived both inspiration and theme from it Between 1870 and 1920 many of them composed plays on the Kṛṣṇa legend.

16. *Hutom Pyāncār Nakśā O Anyānya Samājcitra* (ed. Bandyopādhyāya and Dās) : pp. 27, 32-34, 40-45, 56-46.
17. Ibid., pp. 130-143.
18. *Bāngālīr Gān*, pp. 952, 962-63.

Excepting the lives of saints like Vilvamangala, Rūpa, Sanātana, Haridāsa, Narottama, and Caitanya, the other themes of these plays are taken from the mythologies and the popular legends. Caitanya's renunciation of the world was a familiar motif. Both biographers and playwrights seem to have been attracted by the story of the Vaiṣṇavization of Haridāsa, the Muhammadan. Many of these plays, such as Kunjabihārī Mitra's *Śyāmasohāginī* Bhuvankṛṣṇa Mitra's *Nikunjavihāra,* and Ahibhuṣaṇ Bhattāchārya's *Raiunmādinī* (1901) show their indebtedness to the plays of Kṛṣṇakamal Gosvāmī (which are discussed in the next Chapter). Giriśacandra Ghoṣa's *Caitanyalīlā* was staged in the Star Theatre of Calcutta on August 2, 1884. It was an important event in the history of the Bengali stage.

After the manner of Kṛṣṇa Miśra Yati, the author of *Pravodhacandrodaya,* passions and frailties were given human forms in this play. Caitanya was portrayed in it as a heroic prophet who renounced the world for the redemption of mankind. Beṇīmādhava Adhikārī, a *Rāmāyet* Vaiṣṇava, composed and set tunes to the songs. He was trained in classical Hindustani music by a celebrated master named Ahmad Khan. Beṇīmādhava introduced Vaiṣṇava dances.

Śrīmatī Binodinī, Calcutta demi-monde, and reputed stage artist, created a sensation in her role of Nimāyi or Caitanya by an absolutely artistic and dedicated performance. She received the blessings of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa, who was enchanted by her brilliant performance on the stage. Later, Amṛtlāl Basu wrote that *Caitanyalīlā* contributed much to the contemporary Hindu revivalism. The common people became interested in Vaiṣṇavism. Several new editions of the *Gītā* and the mediaeval biographies of Caitanya were published. Even the 'Anglicized' Bengali *Bābus* affirmed their faith in liberal Hinduism after witnessing the play.[19]

The earliest Vaiṣṇava *Kāvyas* of the nineteenth century were Raghunandana's *Rādhāmādhavodaya* (composed in 1849 and printed in 1890) and *Gītamālā* (Bangabāsī Press, 2nd ed. 1908).

19. Data collected from *Girišacandra* by Avināśacandra Gangopādhyāya. ed. Svapan Majumdār, Calcutta : De's Publishing, 1977 (First ed. Calcutta, 1927), pp. 197-198. Giriśacandra's other Vaiṣṇava plays, entitled "Nimāyisannyāsa", "Prabhāsayajna", "Pralhadacaritra", "Vilvamangala Thākur", "Vrajavihāra" and "Rūpasanātana" were also staged between 1882 and 1887.

Rādhāmādhav Ghoṣa of village Dāśgharā in Hooghly wrote *Bṛhatsārāvalī* in the middle of the nineteenth century. It is probably the largest work in the whole range of Bengali poetic literature. It has four parts. The first part deals with *Kṛṣṇalīlā*.[20] The Rāma-legend is the subject of the second part. The third part deals with the career of Caitanya. The Jagannātha legend is given in the fourth part. A number of songs on the *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa* theme were composed by Iśvar Gupta (1811-1859).[21] The next major poet who used the Vṛndāvana theme was Michel Madhusūdan Datta (1824-1873). Though he was a Christian, and deeply versed in English and continental literature, he never severed his link with Bengal. His poetic genius was deeply impressed by the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legend. On the theme of the separation of the milkmaids from Kṛṣṇa, Madhusūdan composed *Vrajānganā Kāvya* in 1861. He could not forget Rādhā and Sītā. Some of his "Westernized" friends disliked his high regard for the Hindu heroines. In a letter to Rājnārāyaṇ Basu Madhusūdan wrote :

> "I think you are rather cold towards the poor lady of Braja. Poor man ! When you sit down to read poetry, leave aside all religious bias. Besides, Mrs. Rādhā is not such a bad woman after all.[22]

The *Vrajānganā Kāvya* has two cantos. The first canto, which deals with the pang of separation, has eighteen poems. The second canto remained unfinished with only three poems. The language, the mood, and the metrical form of *Vrajānganā Kāvya* are quite different from those of the *Padāvalī*, the *Kavi* and the *Pāncālī* songs. The work is a collection of odes with a central theme. It has no religious mysticism. *Viraha* or the pang of separation, was described in these odes in beautiful language as something intensely human and distinctly individual. The tone was optimistic.[23] The

20. The first and the fourth parts of *Bṛhatsārāvalī* were published by A. Mukherjee, Bānkurā (Second ed. Bānkurā, 1909, 1927). These parts were again published by Akṣaya Library, 40, Garāṇhāta Street, Calcutta in 1956. The number of pages of the first part of the edition of 1956 is 911.
21. These songs are collected in *Bāngālīr Gān*, p. 271 ff.
22. Jogīndranāth Basu, *Michael Madhusūdan Datter Jīvancarit* (Calcutta ed. 1983) p. 341.
23. *"Vasanta"* : *Āila Vasanta Yadi Āsive Mādhava. Michel Madhusūdan Datter Granthāvalī* (Basumatī ed.), Vol. 2, p. 12, No. 17, Stanza 1.

influence of the *Vrajānganā Kāvya* is seen in some of the contemporary *Kāvyas.*

Madhusūdan used the Vṛndāvana imagery even in his celebrated *Meghanādavadhakāvya* (1860). The life and experience of the famous poet were not happy. He was cheated, impoverished, and almost compelled to beg the wherewithal for his "foreign" wife Henrietta, and his children. He was misunderstood and maltreated. It was perhaps quite natural for him to seek escape in the soothing Vṛndāvana legend. Kṛṣṇa and the enchanting music of his flute are very often referred to by the sensitive poet in *Meghanādavadhakāvya* and other poems.[24]

Rasikcandra Rāy (1820-1893), a *Pāncalī* composer, imitated Madhusūdan's blank verse in some poems of his *Haribhakticandrikā.* But the imitation lacked the power and brilliance of Madhusūdan's poems.[25] Yet it revealed the possibility of Vaiṣṇava compositions in a style which was totally different from that of the *Padāvalī.* Some of the poets who composed new types of Vaiṣṇava poems were Banoārīlāl Rāy (1863), Jādavānanda Rāy (1870) and Ganeshcandra Bandyopādhyāya (1864).

Seventy-five poets, excluding Rabīndranāth Tāgore, wrote nearly five hundred lyric poems between 1858 and 1900.[26] Their

24. *Some examples of Vṛndāvana imagery in Meghanādavadhakāvya* : (Michael Madhusūdan Granthāvalī, Basumati ed. Vol. I), Canto 1, p. 2 ; Canto 1, p. 11 ; Canto 3, p. 22 ; Canto 3, p. 28 ; Canto 3, p. 29 ; Canto 4, p. 31 ; Canto 5, p. 46 ; Canto 6, p. 58 ; *Tilottamāsaṃbhavakāvya,* Ibid., Vol. 2 ; Canto 1, p. 7 ; Canto 1, p. 8 ; Canto 1, p. 9 ; Canto 2, p. 15 ; Canto 2, p. 17 ; Canto 2, p. 18 ; Canto 4, p. 28 ; Canto 4, p. 29. In *Caturdaśapadī Kavitavalī* (ibid., Vol. 2), too, there are several references to Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndāvana. Examples : No. 8 : 'Jayadeva' ; No. 13 : 'Paricaya' ; No. 17 : 'Devadola' ; No. 38 ; 'Kalpanā' ; No. 57 : "Śṛngārarasa' ; No. 98 : 'Vrajavṛttānta' ; In one poem, entitled 'Kāka O Śṛgāla' (Ibid., p. 5 of *Vividhakāvya*) a vixen tries to flatter a crow by comparing it with Kṛṣṇa.
25. *Haribhakticandrikā* (1861), p. 58, pp. 96, 130. The work was published by Viśvambhar Lāhā. The full title of the work was *Haribhakticandrikā Arthāt Śrīkṛṣṇaprasanga.* Two other editions of the work were brought out by Viśvambhar Lāhā from Kavitāratnākara Press in B.S. 1281 (1874) and B.S. 1299 (1892). These editions were entitled *Bṛhat Nūtan Haribhakticandrikā.*
26. Arunkumār Mukhopādhyāya, *Ūnaviṃśa Satāvdīr Bānglā Gītikāvya* (Calcutta, 1960) : Appendix B, pp. 324-330 gives a comprehensive list of the poets and their works.

poems on love show a very nebulous trace of the Vaiṣṇava influence The new Bengali poems indicated the waning of the influence of Vaiṣṇava aesthetics. The poetic motifs and motivations grew secular. The new Bengali love-lyric swung like a pendulum between Platonic love and sexual love. The new concept of love between man and woman was absolutely un-Vaiṣṇava. The development should not be regarded as a consequence of the impact of Western poetry. Even an unsophisticated and 'uneducated' poet like Govindacandra Dās (1855-1918), who was known as the *Svabhāva-kavi* or 'natural poet' of Bengal, and who was not conversant with the works of the Western poets, wrote remarkably vigorous poems on *physical* love. The Bengali poets revolted against the rules and conventions of traditional aesthetics which had become totally incompatible with their ideals, concepts and experiences.

Only a few of the new poets wrote poems on Vaiṣṇava themes. A few samples are mentioned here. Govindacandra Rāy (1838-1917) wrote poem on "Vṛndāvanamanjarī". It is included in his *Gītikavitā,* Part III, 1883. His famous poem on "Yamunālararī", included in *Gītikavitā,* Part I, 1881, has a reference to Kṛṣṇa's flute and the pang of separation from Kṛṣṇa, in stanzas 11-13.

Girīndramohiṇī Dāsī (1858-1924) wrote a "dramatic *Kāvya*" on the legend of *Mīrābāi.* It was entitled *Sannyāsinī Vā Mirābāi* (1892). In 1907 she edited a journal named *Jāṇhavī.* In the very first issue of this journal she paid a high tribute to Caitanya.[27]

Akṣayakumār Baḍāl (1860-1919) composed a drama on Caṇḍīdāsa which remained unfinished.[28]

Devendranāth Sen (1858-1920) wrote three Vaiṣṇava *Kāvyas.* These were *Śrīkṛṣṇamangala* (1912, 28 pages), *Gaurāngamangala* (1912, 16 pages) and *Apūrvavrajāngana,* (1913, 8 poems).

Nityakṛṣṇa Basu (1865-1900) wrote a poem, entitled "Caitanyer Dehatyāga", which was published in the *Sāhitya* of Agrahāyaṇa, 1301 (1894).

Navakṛṣṇa Basu (1859-1939) wrote a poem on Kṛṣṇa's final departure from Gokula. It was entitled "Śeṣa", and published in the *last* issue of the journal, *Pracāra* in Caitra, B.S. 1295, 1888.

27. *Sāhitya Sādhaka Caritamālā,* Vol. 5, pp. 16-17.
28. Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 8.

Adharlāl Sen (1855-1885), who was a Suvarṇavaṇik disciple of Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa, a Deputy Magistrate, and a friend of Bankimcandra, used the Kṛṣṇa-legend in some of his poems.[29]

XVI

Rabīndranāth Tagore's views on Vaiṣṇavism may be the subject of a full-fledged dissertation. For the sake of continuity some of them are mentioned below.

The Tāgore family appointed Vaiṣṇava nuns as teachers of the ladies of the family.[30] Professional *Kīrtana* singers were very often employed to sing episodic *Padāvali Kīrtana* in the Tāgore House.[31] Both Devendranāth Tāgore and Dvijendranāth Tāgore, his eldest son, had a profound respect for the Bengali language and native culture, which was fully shared by the other members of the family.

Rabīndranāth read parts of *Prācīnakāvyasaṃgraha* (ed. Akṣayacandra Sarkār and Saradācaraṇ Mitra) in his adolescence and early youth.[32] He was very deeply impressed by the language, rhythm and spirituality of Vaiṣṇava poetry. Tāgore witnessed the beginnings of the nationalist movement during his adolescence and early youth. He developed a great liking for Vaiṣṇava literature as it was very much a part of Bengali culture. His interest in Vaiṣṇava literature stemmed from his great concern for the preservation and cultivation of the national haritage. This concern was evident in his careful editing of the *Padaratnāvalī* anthology in 1885.[33] The anthology was highly praised by Kedārnāth Datta, the

29. *Lalitāsundarī O Kavitāvalī* (1874), pp. 5-6; *Nalinī* (1877) p. 8. For Adharlāl Sen's biography and descriptive catalogue of his works, see, Narendranāth Lāhā, *Suvarṇavanik Kathā O Kīrti*, Vol. 2, pp. 365-446.
30. Basantakumār Cattopādhyāya, *Jyotirindranāther Jīvansmṛti*, p. 62.
31. Dīneshcandra Sen, *Gharer Kathā O Yugasāhitya*, pp. 182-183.
32. *Jīvansmṛti, Rabīndra Racanāvalī* (Government of West Bengal, 1961), Vol. 10, pp. 37, 56.
33. The co-editor was Śriścandra Majumdār (1860-1908). A new edition of this rare anthology has been published with annotations by Bimānbihārī Majumdār. See, *Rabīndrasāhitye Padāvalīr Sthān*, Appendix, "Padaratnāvali, pp. 103-201.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava leader. He wrote : "We heartily thank our brothers Rabīndranāth and Śrīśacandra for the publication of this excellent anthology". He described Rabīndranāth as "pure-hearted, music-lover, and great friend."[34]

Vidyāpati's language and descriptive power charmed the young poet. Between 1881 and 1891 he wrote some brilliant articles on Vaiṣṇava songs.[35] Later he prepared a critical edition of the *Padāvalī* of Vidyāpati with notes on Vaiṣṇava vocabulary. The publication of this work was advertised.[36] But ultimately it remained unpublished. Tagore's collection of the songs of Vidyāpati, furnished with notes on the vocabulary, was borrowed by Kālīprasanna Kāvyaviśārada, who did not return it. The Kāvyaviśārada, who was noted for his ugly bantering lampoons on Tagore's poetry, as well as for his patriotic songs, published *Vidyāpati : Bangīya Padāvalī* in 1894. In the second edition of this work, dated B.S. 1305 (1898), the Kāvyaviśārada was good enough to acknowledge his debt to "Rabīndra Babu's old *Khātā*" (Note-Book),[37] That Tagore had been preparing his Vidyāpati-anthology since 1881 is evident in his critical review of *Prācīnakāvya Saṃgraha* (mentioned above), and his interpretations of some songs of Vidyāpati in "Vidyāpatir Pariśiṣta" (already mentioned). The said interpretations are couched in poetic language, and are, on the whole, perhaps more poetic than the original songs.

Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda,* too, produced a lasting effect on Tagore's mind and art. Some expressions of the *Gītagovinda* were frequently used by him in his poems, songs and essays.[38]

Tagore thought that the highly sophisticated "mixed" language of the *Padāvalī* was very suitable for expressing "extraordinary" feelings.[39] He made a memorable experiment with this lan-

34. *Sajjanatoṣaṇī,* Vol. 2, 1885, pp. 169-172.
35. "Caṇḍīdāsa O Vidyāpati" (*Bhāratī,* Phālguna, 1288/1881) ; "Vasanta Rāya" (Ibid., Śrāvaṇa, 1289/1882) ; "Vaiṣṇav Kabir Gān" (*Navajīvana,* Kārtik, 1291/1884) ; Critical Review of *Prācīnakāvyasaṃgraha* in *Bhāratī,* Śrāvana and Bhādra, 1288/1881 ; "Vidyāpatir Rādhikā" (*Sādhanā* : Caitra, 1298/1891) ; Vidyāpatir Pariśiṣta" (*Bhāratī,* Kārtika, 1288/1881).
36. Pulīnbihārī Sen, *Rabīndragrathapanji,* p. 184.
37. Vide, introduction to this anthology.
38. Sukumār Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās,* Vol. 3, *Rabīndranāth,* p. 6.
39. "Sāhityer Tātparya", *Dīpikā,* 1968, p. 447.

guage in *Bhānusiṃha Thākurer Padāvalī* (B.S. 1291/1884). In this work 21 songs were composed in Brajabulī language. Only a master of the Brajabulī vocabulary could compose these songs, the themes of many of which were un-Vaiṣṇava. Later Tagore quoted *Padāvalī* verses in lots of essays, letters and stories.[40] In the articles on Vaiṣṇava poetry which Tagore wrote between 1881 and 1891, he reached the following conclusions :

Vidyāpati sings of the happiness of love. Caṇḍīdāsa's theme is the soul-stirring agony of love. Vidyāpati considered the beauty of Rādhā from the point of view of Kṛṣṇa. The emotional content in Caṇḍīdāsa's songs heightened their poetic effect. Vidyāpati's songs lacked the touch of indescribable sublimity which characterized Caṇḍīdāsa's songs. As a poet Caṇḍīdāsa was greater than Vidyāpati. The poet Vasanta Rāya was indeed a peer of Vidyāpatī and Caṇḍīdāsa.

Later he came to the conclusion that the extant songs of Vidyāpati were almost entirely different from the original lyrics.[41]

In a letter to Brajendranāth Śīl Tagore wrote that he had imbibed spiritual ideas from the Upaniṣads and Vaiṣṇava poetry.[42] The poet admired Caitanya mainly for three reasons : (i) He thought that it was Caitanya who, by his Vaiṣṇava movement, put an end to Bengal's insularity. (ii) It was Caitanya who had the supreme courage to preach the gospel of universal love at a time when Brāhmaṇical orthodoxy was trying to make the artificial caste divisions extremely rigid. (iii) The advent of Caitanya brought about a brilliant literary efflorescence.[43]

According to Tagore "popular literature" in India originated in the later mediaeval *bhakti* movement.[44] The poet attributed the sixteenth century renaissance in Bengal to the Vaiṣṇava concept of

40. Many examples given by Sukumār Sen, op. cit., and Bimānbihārī Majumdār, op. cit., pp. 55-56.
41. "Sāhityasṛṣti", Rabīndra Racanāvalī, Viśvabhārati ed. Vol. 8, B.S. 1348 (1941), p. 406.
42. Quoted by Bimānbihārī Majumdār, *Rabīndra Sāhitye Padāvalīr Sthān*, p. 12.
43. "Cithipatra", *Rabīndra Racanāvalī*, Viśvabhāratī ed. Vol. 2, B.S. 1346 (1939), p. 528.
44. "Sāhityasṛṣti", op. cit., pp. 399-406.

universal liberation and the cult of divine love. In his inimitable style and rousing language, which can hardly be translated into English, Tagore wrote :[45]

> "Liberation was not the monopoly of the fortunate few. God cannot be kept confined within the scriptural corpus. As soon as this sublime idea was postulated, all the sleeping birds of our country woke up and began to sing. Bengal discovered herself only during the Vaiṣṇava age. During the Śākta age Bengal remained spiritually poor But Vaiṣṇavism brought her fulfilment".

In another essay Tagore paid a handsome tribute to the Vaiṣṇava concept of universal brotherhood.[46] He discovered in the fraternal affection of the Vṛndāvana cowherds for the boy Kṛṣṇa the symbol of the spiritual greatness of the poor and the simple folks. They pined for a tangible relation with an essentially intangible God.[47]

Vaiṣṇava poetry was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. The sensitive poet could not tolerate any vulgar presentation of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legend. He strongly criticized the earlier *Kavi*-poets for having dared depict Kṛṣṇa as a boorish Casanova and Rādhā as a shrew.[48] He was deeply stirred by the spiritual significance of the Vaiṣṇava theory of extra-marital love. This love he regarded as the love conceived in the human soul for God and Abstract Beauty. He was moved by the pathos in Rādhā's love, for which she even broke off her social ties. He appreciated the distinction between egotistic libido and spiritual *Prema*.[49]

In another place Tagore interpreted the legend of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa love in a novel manner. Kṛṣṇa's flute was the symbol of the Unknown and the Uncertain for which Man has ever felt a deep attraction. The inner music makes Man sever his relation with what is known, and seek the Unknown and the Uncertain.

45. "Banga Bhāsā O Sāhitya", *Racanāvalī*, Vol. 8, op. cit., pp. 443-444.
46. *Rabīndra Racanāvalī*, Viśvabhāratī ed. Vol. 8, "Sāhitya Sanmilan" pp. 499-500.
47. *Rabīndra Racanāvalī*, 1961, ed. Government of West Bengal, Vol. 10, p. 110.
48. "Kavisāhitya" in *Lokasāhitya* (1905).
49. "Grāmya Sāhitya" in *Lokasāhitya*

Certain venturesome nations like Japan also seek the Unknown. Like Rādhā, these nations are *Kulatyāginī,* "unfaithful to the family-ties".[50]

The beauty of nature reminded him of the rhythm of Vaiṣṇava poetry. The "eternal" Vṛndāvana lay in the ever fresh beauty of nature.[51]

Tagore saw a distinction between what he regarded as the Śākta idea of *Anugraha* or Divine Favour and the Vaiṣṇana concept of *Prema* or Love Divine. God's favour was bestowed on the fortunate few who were able to propitiate Him. But God's love, like sun-light, was bestowed on all living beings. The concept of favour sprang from a dualistic view of the relation between God and the living beings. But the concept of *Prema* strengthened the non-dualistic view.[52]

Tagore did not pronounce any opinion on the *Acintyabhedābheda* theory of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.[53] The poet, however, interpreted the ecstatic pining for Hari or Kṛṣṇa as the desire of the genuine devotee to be eternally devoted to God.[54] Vaiṣṇava influence on Tagore's poetry or the supposed presence of the Vaiṣṇava leaven in it may be determined by a purely subjective analysis of his poems, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation.[55] Here we can only mention a few poems and short stories which reveal Tagore's ideas of Vaiṣṇavism. In a poem entitled "Janmāntar" (included in *Kṣaṇikā,* 1900) Rabīndranāth expressed his dislike of the artificiality of modern civilization and his wish to be reborn as a simple, poetic shepherd of mythical Vṛndāvana. Vaiṣṇava imagery is found in "Patra" (1887), "Ekāl O Sekāl" (1888), "Varṣār Dine" (1889) and "Meghadūta" (1890), which are collected in *Mānasī* (1886-1890). The poet thought that Vaiṣṇava poetry remained ever fresh and inspiring mainly because it reflected

50. "Jāpān Jātrī; *Rabīndra Racanāvalī,* 1961, Government of West Bengal, Vol. 10, pp. 494-495.
51. *Chinnapatrāvalī,* dated August 24, 1894.
52. *Rabīndra Racanāvalī,* Viśvabhāratī ed. Vol. 8, "Banga Bhāṣā O Sāhitya", pp. 432-446.
53. See, on this point the view of Sukumār Sen, op. cit., p. 103.
54. "Śrāvaṇa Sandhyā", *Dīpikā,* pp. 416-417.
55. This attempt has been made by Bimān Bihārī Majumdār, op. cit., Ch. 6, pp. 67-81.

the sub-conscious and intensely human yearnings of the poets. This idea was expressed in "Vaiṣṇava Kavitā" included in *Sonār Tari* (1893). Tagore imagined that he was like Rādhā searching for the fulfilment of his aspirations ("Vyārtha Yauvan", composed in 1893). The agony of Rādhā is revealed in 'Pratyākhyāṇ" (1892). The inspiration for the poem "Pasāriṇī" (1898) came from a Vaiṣṇava theme.

The concept of God's "eternal sports" (*Nityalīlā*) is a recurrent theme in the poems of *Naivedya* (1901). In "Pratijnā" (included in *Kṣaṇikā*) a young man declares that he shall never be an ascetic unless a beautiful girl entices him away with her "world-enchanting" smile. This wonderful poem perhaps reflects Tagore's appreciation of the spirit innate in Sahajiyā religious culture. In "Mukti" (collected in *Vicitrā,* pp. 562-63), *bhakti* has been considered the fruit of *Prema.*

Two poems, based on legends of the *Bhaktamāla* have been included in *Kathā O Kāhinī* (B.S. 1306/1899). These are "Sparśamaṇi", in which Sanātana figures as the redeemer of a greedy man, and "Dīnadāna", which deals with Narottama's ascetic ideal and superb moral courage.

In a short story entitled 'Boṣtamī", Tagore explained in poetic language how a Vaiṣṇava nun had transformed her love for her dear ones into love for Kṛṣṇa, who had a human figure. The story had a real background.[56] In the concluding paragraph of "Atithi", the *Rathayātrā* festival has been described as the symbol of cosmic dynamism.

Tagore composed a good number of songs either with Vaiṣṇava allusions, or directly on the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme.[57] The music shows unmistakable traces of *Kīrtana* and *Bāul* tunes. The *Khol* and the *Mṛdanga,* typical Vaiṣṇava musical instruments, are extensively used in *Rabīndra*-music. According to Tagore, Vaiṣṇava *Kīrtana* lent to Bengali music a provincial character which made it distin-

56. Sukumār Sen, op. cit., pp. 347-349.
57. *Gītavitāna* (ed. B.S. 1357/1950) "Pūjā", Nos. 454, 532; "Prema", Nos. 36, 58, 59, 140, 144, 181, 198, 220, 252, 300, 368; "Prakṛti" Nos. 26, 31; "Vicitrā"; No. 88; "Nātyagīti", Nos. 20, 22, 74, 82; "Pūjā O Prāthanā", No. 31; "Pariśiṣta", No. 2.

guishable from Hindustani music. Formerly the classical *Rāgas* and *Rāginīs* constituted an aspect of the mediaeval aristocratic culture. Their use in Vaiṣṇava *Kīrtana* transformed them into an essential part of the popular musical culture of Bengal. *Kīrtana* became a great medium of expression of the Bengali ethos.[58]

Rabīndranāth was impressed in his youth by the language and rhythm of the *Padāvalī* and the simple devotion of Vairāgīs, Boṣtams, Bāuls and Darbeshes. He had no connection with any Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava 'Bābājī' or *Guru*. He himself was never a Vaiṣṇava. In fact he saw many limitations of Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* and the Vaiṣṇava emphasis on *Rasa*.

He wrote that the Vaiṣṇava poets never cared to consider the disastrous effects of a storm on Rādhā's dress and appearance while they ecstatically described her progress, in heavy storm and rain, towards rendezvous with Kṛṣṇa.[59] He came to the conclusion that Jayadeva's verses soon grow monotonous.[60] He did not think that *bhakti* was the highest spiritual culture. Divorced from *Karma*, mere *Bhakti* grew meaningless.[61] He expressed his preference for the *Yoga* of Action in a poem entitled "Dhulāmandir".[62] Tagore sharply criticized *bhakti* ecstasy, Vaiṣṇava emotionalism, and the Vaiṣṇava emphasis on *Rasa*.[63] He even parodied Vaiṣṇava *Padāvalī* in "Masakamangalagītikā" (composed on October 30, 1940). In this poem, a mosquito, "much lower than a grass-blade" (*"Tṛṇādapi Sunicena"*) vexes a *bhakta* who is supposed to be more patient than a tree (*"Taroriva Sahiṣṇunā"*).

Tagore's spiritual aim was not the attainment of liberation in Vaikuntha, the highest heaven of the Vaiṣṇavas. He did not want

58. *Rabīndra Racanāvalī* (Viśvabhāratī ed.), Vol. 2, p. 529; "Jāvā Jātrir Patra", in *Rabīndra Racanāvalī* (1961, Government of West Bengal), Vol. 10, pp. 635-636.
59. "Chinnapatrāvalī; *Vicitrā*, p. 48.
60. "Kekādhani", *Vicitrā*, p. 124.
61. "Nivedan", *Vicitrā*, p. 565.
62. Included in *Dīpikā*, p. 564.
63. No. 45 in *Naivedya, Rabīndra Racanāvalī*, Vol. 2, op. cit., p. 40. "Śāntiniketan", B.S. 1315/1908, Vol. 2, p. 393. Also see for comments, Janardan Cakravartī *Śrī Rādhātattva O Caitanyasaṃskṛti*, p. 35.

to sever his link with the earth.[64] The main point is that Tagore did not worship Kṛṣṇa, who is supposed by the Vaiṣṇavas to be the "transcendental" *Rasika*. He was not prepared to drive a wedge between *Rasa* and the material world. He could not visualise a God who always played the love-game. He could not see the way to accepting a purely mystic experience as something better or nobler than reality. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava reaction to Tagore's "Vaiṣṇava Kavitā" was quite violent. This poem was described as gibberish. The poet was described, in an indirect manner, as "fly" which carries "night-soil". The poet was a "village poet, with his libido-stained eyes darkened by a century of cataracts."[65]

Rabīndranāth once raised serious objection to Bankimcandra's view that Kṛṣṇa told a lie "to ensure the welfare of the people".[66] He wrote : "A lie can never be truth. The lie may be told by venerable Bankimcandra, and even by Kṛṣṇa Himself. But still the lie will not be truth.[67] Tagore was not prepared to accept the view that the country needed the re-incarnation of a lying Śrīkṛṣṇa. Bankimcandra felt very hurt by these strongly worded comment on his essay. But he wished Tagore well and long life.[68]

64. "Mukti" in No. 30 *Naivedya,* beginning with *"Vairāgyasādhane Mukti Se Āmār Naya".*
65. Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda, *Gauḍīya Sāhitya,* second ed. 1929, pp. 29-30.
66. Tagore's criticism was expressed in "Ekti Purātan Kathā", *Bhāratī,* Agrahāyaṇa, B.S. 1291 (1884). Bankimcandra's answer was published in the first issue of *Pracāra* Śrāvaṇa, B.S. 1291 (1884).
67. Quoted by Pulinbihārī Sen, *Rabīndra Granthapanji,* pp. 220-221.
68. *Bankim Racanāvalī* (ed. 1954, Sāhitya Samsad), Vol. 2, "Ādi Brāhma Samāj O Nava Hindu Saṃpradāya", pp. 913-19.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE VAIṢṆAVA ELEMENT IN TYPES OF BENGALI SONGS AND DRAMA : 1800-1900

I

Caitanya and his followers spread Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal chiefly through the medium of *Kīrtana,* which may be described as group-chanting of the holy *Name,* accompanied with ecstatic dancing. This type of *Kīrtana* was also known as *Nagarakīrtana.* On certain occasions like the *Śrāddha* ceremony, or a festival, *Nāmakīrtana* was held for a definite period of time. The following was the *Nāmakīrtana* :

Hare Rāma/Hare Rāma/Rāma Rāma/Hare Hare//

The other generic type of *Kīrtana* was called *Līlākīrtana.* Whereas remarkable simplicity was the key-note of *Nāmakīrtana, Līlākīrtana* was characterized by high sophistication of language and tune. The *Līlā* or the sport was narrated in rhymed songs, composed in Brajabuli. *Līlākīrtana* had to conform to Gauḍīya Vaiṇava aesthetic formulations. The *Smaraṇamangala* formula was followed. *Līlākīrtana* was composed on the types and situation defined and described in the *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi.* One of the basic aims of *Nagarakīrtana* was to generate the ecstasy of *bhakti.* A Vaiṣṇava poet named Paramānanda once wrote : "I do not know how to dance. Yet I dance, uttering Gaurānga's name. I do not know how to sing. Yet I sing".[69] The *Līlākīrtana* could hardly be sung by such a man. The conformity to the postulates and the specifications laid down in the *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi,* and the linguistic rigidity made *Līlākīrtana* hopelessly stereotyped. The stereotype could not adversely affect the creations of the highly gifted poets like Rāyaśekhara, Jnānadāsa, Govindadāsa Kavirāja, Balarāma Dāsa, and Uddhava Dāsa. But yet the *Līlākīrtana* grew monotonous, and exceedingly artificial. Some poets like Jagadānanda of village Joflāi in Burdwan began to use the flowers of language, and thus made their lyrics more and more artificial. Even in the sixteenth cen-

69. *"Nācite Nā Jāni Tamu/Nāciye Gaurānga Bali/Gāyite Nā Jāni Tamu Gāi", Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī,* ed. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, p. 267.

tury some *Padāvalī* composers felt the need of variegation. Kṛṣṇa's disguise became an attractive theme. Stories of Kṛṣṇa's ability to hoodwink the relatives of Rādhā were told in a good number of songs. In *Camatkāracandrikā* Viśvanātha Cakravartī described the four types of disguise used by Kṛṣṇa. The disguise is also described in the songs of Kaviśekhara,[70] Jnānadāsa,[71] Vṛndāvana Dāsa,[72] Govindadāsa Kavirāja,[73] Dīnavandhu[74] and Śaśīśekhara.[75] These songs on disguise were sung on the *Harivāsara* night.[76] But the composers of these songs merely stretched the aesthetic concept of Kṛṣṇa as an amorous hero, without ever feeling that they had brought their God down from the high pinnacle of divinity to the level of a lacklustre Casanova.

It was difficult to appreciate the fine points of the *Līlākīrtana* without aesthetic expertise and knowledge of classical music. The classical nature of the *Kīrtana* was first stressed upon in *Hari-bhaktivilāsa.*[77] *Kīrtana* was given a classical garb in Vṛndāvana by some celebrated singers like Haridāsa Svāmin, who was probably a *guru* of the Nimvārka sect, and his disciple, Tānsen, who was Akbar's court-musician.

It is said that Narottama Datta learnt the various classical modes in Vṛndāvana. He is said to have introduced classical *Kīrtana* in Bengal during the Kheturi festival with the approval of the contemporary Vaiṣṇava leaders. Narottama was assisted by two musicians named, respectively, Devī Dāsa and Gaurānga Dāsa. Narottama had to stipulate that the *Līlākīrtana* was to be preceded by *Gaurcandrikā* songs on the career and sports of Caitanya. The style of *Kīrtana* introduced in Kheturi was known as *Gaḍānhāti* style because, according to tradition, Kheturi was said to be a part of "Gaḍāṇhāti" *Parganā. Gaḍaṇhāti Kīrtana* was the Vaiṣṇava

70. *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, ed Mukhopādhyāya, pp. 317-318.
71. Ibid., p. 479.
72. Ibid., pp. 483-85.
73. Ibid., pp. 672-673.
74. Ibid., pp. 966-968.
75. Ibid., p. 1027.
76. Haridāsa Dāsa, *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, Ch. 4, p. 138.
77. *Vilasa* 8, Verse 247.

equivalent of classical *Dhruvapada.* It had one hundred and eight types of *tālas* or rhythmic beats.[78]

The *Manoharasāhī* style, with fifty-four *tālas,* was the Vaiṣṇava equivalent of classical *Kheyal.* The style evolved in the sixteenth century in Śrīkhaṇḍa, Kāndrā and Mainādāl villages of Bīrbhum. The earliest exponents of this *Kīrtana,* which was named after *Parganā Manoharasāhī,* were Jnānadāsa, Govindadāsa Kavirāja, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Raghunandana of Śrīkhaṇḍa, and Mangala Thākura of Kāndrā. Mangala Thākura was a Vaiṣṇava of the branch of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. His disciple Nṛsiṃha Mitra lived in Mainādāl. Two other notable centres of the *Manoharasāhī* school developed in Dakṣiṇakhaṇḍa in Murshidābād and Pāyer village in Bīrbhūm. Owing to the great popularity of this style, *Gaḍaṇhāti Kīrtana* gradually waned, and was ultimately consigned to the limbo of forgotten things. Advaitadāsa Bābāji (1837-1930), grandfather of Bimānabihārī Majumdār, the historian, tried very hard to resurrect the *Gaḍāṇhatī* mode by setting up a *Kīrtana* school in Cossimbāzār with the help of Manīndracandra Nandī, the local *Mahārājā.* But he soon found his pupils incapable of singing *Kīrtana* in that style. The school was, therefore, disestablished.[79]

Three other styles of *Kīrtana* developed in West Bengal. These were *Reṇeti, Mandārinī* and *Jhāḍakhaṇḍī.* Vipradāsa Ghose, a *Padāvalī*-composer, developed the *Reṇeti style.*[80] It was the Vaiṣṇava equivalent of the classical *Thumri* with twenty-six types of beats. The *Mandārinī* evolved out of the tunes of the *Mangalakāvyas.* The *Jhāḍkhaṇḍī* style evolved from the tunes prevalent in the bush-covered Jhāḍakhaṇḍa region on the borders between West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The *Jhāḍkhaṇḍī Kīrtana* was probably popularized by one Gokula of Pancakot. *Mandārinī* and *Jhāḍkhaṇḍī,* now forgotten, undoubtedly reflected the natural link between *Kīrtana* and folk-music in West Bengal.

78. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Bānglār Kīrtan O Kīrtanīyā,* pp. 84, 210-213. But "Gaḍāṇhāti Parganā" is yet to be specifically identified. Sukumār Sen thinks that "Gaḍānhāti Kīrtana" evolved in Gaḍānhāta of Calcutta in the eighteenth century. It was sung by female singers. Sukumār Sen, "Śavdavidyār Āncaḍe Kalkātār Skeleton"—*Ānandabāzār Patrikā,* Sunday, May 30, 1982.
79. Ibid., pp. 224-226; *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana,* Vol. 2, pp. 281-286.
80. *Bānglār Kīrtan O Kīrtanīyā,* p. 83.

Ultimately the *Manoharasāhī* experts, and those who were anxious to maintain the classic purity of the *Kīrtana,* adopted some well-concerted measures to stop the infiltration of folk-elements into it. In the middle of the seventeenth century Rāmagopāla Dāsa of Śrīkhaṇḍa, his son Pītāmvara Dāsa, the theologian Viśvanātha Cakravartī, and Viśvanātha's disciple Nandakiśora Gosvāmin explained the fundamental theories of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava aesthetics and prepared anthologies of the *Padāvalī* songs. The first step in this direction was taken by Rāmagopāla Dāsa and Pītāmvara Dāsa. In deference to the wish of some Vaiṣṇavas of Ketugrāma and Bhānugrāma, Rāmagopāla composed *Rasakalpavallī* in 1663 or thereabouts. The local Vaiṣṇavas informed him of their inability to understand the concept and categories of *Rasa* written in Sanskrit.[81] The speciality of Rāmagopāla Dāsa's work consisted in its liberal approach. He did not reject the ideas of such secular theoreticians of *Rasa* as Viśvanātha, Mammata Bhatta and Bhānu Datta. In the ten chapters of this work, the songs of the *Padāvalī* have been liberally quoted as illustrations of the aesthetic ideas and types. These illustrative songs have lent to *Rasakalpavallī* the character of an anthology. The categories of the *Nāyikās* and their relevance to the eight types of *Rasa* constitute the subject-matter of Pītāmvara Dāsa's *Aṣtarasanirūpaṇa* and *Rasamanjarī.*[82]

The *Padāvalī,* composed in conformity to *Ujjvalanīlmaṇī,* were collected in an anthology entitled *Govindaratimanjarī* by Ghanaśyāma, who was the grandson of Govindadāsa Kavirāja, and son of Divya Siṃha. It has five chapters, the arrangement of which makes it full plain that Ghanaśyāma wrote it mainly for the use of the *Kīrtana* composers and singers. In an introductory verse Ghanaśyāma has rather cynically tried to debunk the contemporary songs. He says : "I wish to compose songs and poems, and feel proud of my poetic ability, till I do not listen to the reci-

81. *Rasakalpavallī,* Intro. p. 5. Text, p. 4 ; *"Dui Cāri Vaiṣṇava More Kaila Uparodha/ Saṃskṛta Bujhite Mora Nāhi Kichu Bodha// Bhāṣā kariyā Rasa Bujhāha Āmāre/ Atayeva Saṃkṣepe Kari Nā Haya Vistāre// Ketugrāme Bhānugrāme Vaiṣṇava Dui Cāri/ Sabhākāra Uparodha Eḍāyite Nāri//*

82. These works of Pītāmvara Dāsa have been edited along with *Rasakalpavalli.*

tation of the writings of Sanātana, Rūpa and Jīva, and the variegated lyrics of Govindadāsa.[83]

Viśvanātha Cakravartī, who was regarded as the reincarnation of Rūpa Gosvāmin,[84] was indeed a great scholar and a believer in the doctrine of the extra-conjugality of Kṛṣṇa's loves. He edited an important anthology of *Padāvalī* entitled *Kṣṇadāgītacintāmaṇi*. The anthology has three hundred and fifteen songs. Fifty-one of these songs were composed by him. As a *Padakartā*, or composer of *Padāvalī*, Viśvanātha used the *alias* of Harivallabha or Vallabha. The other old anthologies were the *Padāmṛtasamudra* of Rādhāmohan Thākur, the *Padakalpataru* of Vaiṣṇava Dāsa, *Padameru*,[85] *Kīrtanānanda* of Gaursundar Dāsa, *Samkīrtanāmṛta* of Dīnavandhu Dāsa, *Padarasasāra* of Nimānanda Dāsa, *Padaratnākara* of Kamalākānta Dāsa, and *Padakalpalatikā*.[86]

Viśvanātha Cakravartī's disciple Nandakiśora Dāsa (Gosvāmin) went to Vṛndāvana, where he wrote *Vṛndāvanalīlāmṛta* and *Rasakalikā*. Written in Bengali verse, *Rasakalikā* contains an elaborate exposition of the theories and classifications of *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*.[87]

While the Vaiṣṇava scholars remained busy in interpreting and translating the aesthetic doctrines of the Gosvāmins, the Vaiṣṇava singers were trying to build up for *Līlākīrtana* a sound base in classical theory. This work was accomplished mainly by Narahari Cakravartī whose knowledge of the traditions of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was very great. He gave an elaborate exposition of the classical theories of Indian music in the fifth chapter of BRK.

Narahari Cakravartī believed that classical music was "divine" and that "Deśī" or indigenous music was "mundane".[88] According to a verse quoted by him, the correct rendering of some particular classical modes "increases the life-span, intensifies *Dharma*, promotes general welfare, and even leads to imperialist expansion."[89]

83. *Govindaratimanjarī*, ed. Haridāsa Dāsa, p. 6, verse—9.
84. *Śrī Śrī Suratakathāmṛtaṃ*, Intro. p. 1.
85. The MS. of *Padameru* is in *Viśvabhāratī* collection, MS. No. 950 : Pancānan Maṇḍal, *Puthiparicaya*, Vol. 2, p. 155.
86. Vide PKT, Vol. 5, pp. 1-14 (introduction) ; Sukumār Sen, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās*, Vol. 1, Part II, pp. 398-404.
87. *Rasakalikā* has been edited and published by Haridāsa Dāsa.
88. BRK, Ch. 5, p. 231, verse 2500.
89. BRK, Ch. 5, verses 2769-2771.

The readers were asked to believe that songs on the excellence of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, composed by Narahari himself, were sung in the classical style by the singing birds of Vṛndāvana.[90] Narahari profusely quotes chapter and verse to elucidate the classical nature of *Kīrtana*. He quotes verses from Bharata's *Nātyaśāstra,* Kohala, *Nāradasaṃhitā, Saṃgītasāra, Pancamasārasaṃhitā* of Nārada, *Saṃgītaratnamālā* of Mammatācārya, *Saṃgītadāmodara* of Śubhankara, *Saṃgītadarpaṇa* of Dāmodara Paṇḍita, Harināyaka, *Saṃgītapārijāta* of Ahovala, and *Saṃgītamuktāvalī.*

Seventy-two "pure" and "mixed" *Rāgas* and *Rāginīs* are mentioned in Narahari Cakravartī's *Gītacandrodaya.* Narahari Cakravartī's sectarianism was so deep that he did not mention *Bhairavī,* which is a very popular and famous mode, presumably because it symbolizes *Bhairavī,* one of the ten *vidyās* of Kālī, the Śākta goddess.[91]

There was, however, a natural link between the development of classical *Kīrtana* and that of the classical song. But excepting the Viṣṇupur *gharāṇā* or tradition, no other *gharāṇa* developed in Bengal. The *Manoharasāhī* school of *Kīrtana* remained centred in Bīrbhūm, Burdwan and Murshidābād. Bīrbhūm was once a centre of Kṛṣṇa worship in the *Sākhybhāva* or *friendly* mood, which was made popular by Vaiṣṇavas like Dhananjaya Paṇḍita and Parṇigopāla. The overwhelming stress on *Madhurarati* in the *Manoharasāhī Kīrtana* presumably enfeebled *Sakhyabhāva* and strengthened *Rāgānugā* eroticism. Love-*Kīrtana* of the *Manoharasāhī* pattern became a ritual even of the *Goṣthalīlā Kīrtana,* since it was believed (in accordance with the *Smaraṇamangala* formula) that Kṛṣṇa 'sported' with Rādhā even while looking after the kine.[92] It may not be altogether wrong or improper to say that *Manoharasāhī Kīrtana* was developed as a classic form by the *Gauranāgara* Vaiṣṇavas of Śrīkhaṇḍa, the *Parakiyā* theorists of Murshidābād, and the *Gadāigaurānga* Vaiṣṇavas of Kāndrā and Mainādāl with a view to undermining *Sakhyabhāva* in Bīrbhūm, Burdwan and Murshidābād.

90. BRK, Ch. 5, pp. 259-60.
91. Narahari Cakravartī also mentions one hundred *Tālas* : *BRK,* Ch. 5, pp. 263-64.
92. Mukhopādhyāya, *Bānglār Kīrtan O Kīrtanīyā,* p. 99.

Manoharasāhī Kīrtana, however, could not invariably follow the purely classical pattern, partly because Bengal was never a noted centre of the classical style of music, and partly because Vaiṣṇava *Padāvalī* was essentially descriptive. In the *Līlākīrtana,* the *Līlā*-episode is more important than the tune. Hundreds of *Padas* may be sung *Yathārāga* or in any suitable mode. Even in the *Gītacandrodaya* of Narahari Cakravartī, two or three tunes, such as *Dhānsi, Śrī,* or *Suhai* are more frequently specified than the other classical tunes. The purely classical or *Vaithakī* patterns were not altogether ignored.[93] But the wordy structure of the *Kīrtana* song led to the vulgarization of the classical style.

In both *Gaḍānhāti* and *Manoharasāhī Kīrtana* the singers and their assistants were required to add their own words to what they had to sing. These additional sentences, mostly composed in spoken Bengali, were known as *Ākhara.* Soon *Ākhara* became the kernel of classical *Kīrtana.*[94] The *Ākhara* improvisation certainly undermined the supposed classical base of *Kīrtana.* Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa was an expert *Ākhariyā.* The examples of his *Ākhara* given in the five volumes of his *Kathāṃṛta* make it perfectly clear that *Ākhara* was really spoken out, and not really sung.[95] A similar innovation was the alliterative *Tukka. Ākhara* was prose. *Tukka* was an improvised song which was added to the original *Kīrtana.*[96]

Jhumur, a popular folk-song prevalent in the Rāḍa region, also became an essential feature of the classical *Kīrtana.*[97] *Kīrtana* was gradually influenced by the spirit of professional rivalry. In big assemblies different singers terminated their songs in a manner which made the episodic sequence highly problematical for the subsequent singers. They had to pick up their prefatory *Gauracandrikā* in accordance with the correct sequence. *Jhumur* was sung to maintain the sequence.[98] Later, towards the end of the nineteenth century, even *Nagarakīrtana* and *Gaurcandrikā* had, in some places, the design of a typical *Kavi*-song.[99]

93. Khagendranāth Mitra, *Padāmṛtamādhurī,* Vol. 3, Intro. p. 39.
94. Mukhopādhyāya, op. cit., p. 85.
95. Swāmī Abhedānanda, *Āmar Jīvan Kathā,* 2nd ed. pp. 50-51.
96. Mukhopādhyāya, op. cit., p. 85.
97. Many examples of *Jhumur* in *Padāmṛtamādhurī.*
98. Mukhopādhyāya, op. cit., p. 228.
99. *Sangitakoṣa, "Nagarkīrtana",* pp. 757-800.

Ākhara, Jhumur and *Tukka,* however, could not bring about any change in the rigid classification of moods, situations, heroes and heroines. No experiment was possible in the mediaeval structure of the *Padāvalī*. The basic language had to be Brajabuli. The ideas had to conform to the Vaiṣṇava *Rasaśāstra* and concept of *bhaktirasa*. Beyond *Vipralambha* and *Sambhoga* no other additional concept was permissible. There was no room for any other conceptual innovation.

The number of *Kīrtana*-singers grew large. Most of them belonged to Bīrbhūm, Murshidābād and Burdwān. Most of them have been saved from total obscurity by Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya who had indefatigably worked for many, many years to discover their identities.

II

Rāmgopāl Dāsa, Viśvanāth Cakravartī, and Narahari Cakravartī tried their best to strengthen the classical roots of the *Līlākīrtana* at a time when some other types of songs were evolving in Nadiā, Hooghly, and Calcutta with an unmistakably Vaiṣṇava leaven in them. Of these new songs, the *Kavi*-song was the most important. It had a generic character.

The typical *Kavi*-song was improvised in a *Kavi*-soiree by two rival poet-singers, each of whom led a group. The *Kavi*-song had three distinct sequences which formed an integrated pattern. These were : *Citen* or the Introduction ; *Mahaḍā* or the Preparation ; *Antarā* or the Intermediate Link between Introduction and the End.

These sequences were slightly changed when the songs were written. *Mahaḍā* was first stated, and it was followed by *Citen*. Towards the beginning of the nineteenth century the subjects of *Kavi*-songs were the Glory of the *Guru, Sakhīsaṃvāda, Viraha,* and *Kheuḍ*. Later, songs on the *Gauracandrikā* and the *Goṣthalīlā* of Kṛṣṇa were also sung. Ultimately, the *Kavi*-song grew stereotyped with only four subjects, namely *Sakhisaṃvāda, Āgama, Lahara,* and *Kheuḍ*.

The *Kavi*-songs evolved in the pre-modern urban centres of Hooghly and Nadiā towards the end of the seventeenth century.

One of the earliest *Kavi*-singers was Gonjlā Guin who flourished, according to Īśvar Gupta, in 1714 or thereabouts.[1] Towards the end of the eighteenth century *Kavi*-songs became highly popular in Calcutta. Two notable patrons of *Kavi*-songs in Calcutta were Rājā Nubkissen Bahādur of Śobhābāzār, and Aśutoṣa Deva of Simlā, who "maintained" as many as one hundred and eight *Kavi*-singers in the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century.[2]

There are conflicting opinions about the origin of the *Kavi*-songs. According to one view these songs originated in the melo-dramatic *Kṛṣṇayātrā*. Another scholar ascribes their origin to the *Pāncālī*-songs. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya and Asitkumār Bandyopādhyāya trace their origin to the *Jhumur*-songs.[3] It is indeed very difficult to say how and wherein the *Kavi*-song did really originate. But it must be noted that the thematic structure of the *Kavi*-song was unmistakably Vaiṣṇava. The conversations in the *Līlākīrtana*, particularly the speeches of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā and the *Sakhīs*, very probably formed the models of the *Kavi*-songs. *Sakhīsaṃvāda* represented the dialogue between Rādhā and one of her female friends, who informs her of the whereabouts and activities of Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā. The *Viraha*-song expressed the agony of Rādhā after Kṛṣṇa went away from Vṛndāvana. The structural analysis of the *Kavi*-songs collected by Īśvar Gupta (1812-1859) in 1854-55[4] leads to the conclusion that the dialogue between Rādhā and her *Sakhī* constituted their nucleus. Classical *Manoharasāhī Kīrtana* was not comprehensible to the unlettered people.[5] But the legend of the loves of Kṛṣṇa remained ever popular in a society which frowned upon extra-marital love. The *Kavi*-singers sang their songs on this love, depicting Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā as their hero and heroine. The deep agony of love-lorn Rādhā, after she was forsaken by Kṛṣṇa, touched a tender chord. The *Kavi*-singers knew both the classical tunes and the technical point of the *Līlākīrtana*. They

1. *Īśvar Gupta Racanāvalī*, Vol. 1, (1974 ed.) p. 109 : date estimated from the year 1854.
2. Ibid., pp. 189-90 ; *Bānglā Abhidhān*, Subalcandra Mitra, p. 1058.
3. Asit Kumār Bandyopādhyāya sums up the various theories, *Bānglā Sāhityer Itivṛtta*, Vol. 4, pp. 40-46.
4. These songs are collected in *Iśvar Gupta Racanāvalī*, Vol. I (1974 ed.). See also Īśvar Gupta's *Kavijīvanī*, ed. Bhavatosh Datta (1958).
5. Mukhopādhyāya, *Gauḍa-Vanga Saṃskṛiti*, p. 116.

rebelled against the sterile formalism of the *Kīrtana*, composed songs on *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa* in spoken Bengali, and gave these songs attractive tunes. This development represented a definite advance from stereotype to innovation. Rhyme was never the strong point of the *Kavi*-song. It had, so to speak, no rhyme. But talented *Kavis* like Rāma Basu (1786-1828) used a simple but poetic diction which charmed Īśvar Gupta, who himself was a notable poet and composer of *Kavi*-songs. The *Kavis* scarcely depicted Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā as divine beings. Their purpose was never to acquaint their listeners with Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava aesthetics. They composed songs which had nothing to do with metaphysics and spiritualism. They depicted Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary beau. Rādhā was a young and rather loquacious belle who passionately loved Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa of the *Kavi*-songs are ordinary human beings with the usual frailties. Rabīndranāth Tagore did not like the puns and the alliterations of the *Kavi*-songs. The deviousness of Kṛṣṇa and the querulous nature of Rādhā hurt the great poet.[6]

A sizable section of the *Kavi*-audience worshipped Durgā. The professional *Kavi*-singers had to add *Āgama* to their repertoire of Vaiṣṇava songs. The *Āgama* described, in the words of Menakā or her husband Himālaya, the arrival of Umā or Durgā at the parental home, where she would stay for a short period of three days in the Bengali month of Āśvina. Her sojourn in the Himālayas synchronized with the *Durgāpūjā* festival in Bengal. The *Āgama* songs were very tender. *Lahara* or *Lihara* and *Kheuḍ* were the most popular subjects of the *Kavi*-songs. The origin of *Lahara* is uncertain. The disreputable *Kheuḍ*, a Bengali version of the "merry muse of Caledonia", was invented in Śāntipur in the eighteenth century.[8] Īśvar Gupta did not publish any *Lahara* or *Kheuḍ* simply because he considered them unprintable. The 'uncultured' members of the audience often asked the *Kavi*-singers to sing *Lahara* or *Kheuḍ* when they could no longer bear the tragedy

6. Tagore, *Lokasāhitya* (1965 ed.), pp. 82-85.
7. "*Lihara*" is referred to in mukhopādhyāya's *Gauḍa-Vanga Saṃskṛti*, p. 142.
8. *Vidyāsundar Granthāvalī* (Basumatī ed.), p. 66 : *"Nade Śāntipur Haite Kheḍu Ānāyiva/ Nūtana Nūtana Thāthe Kheḍu Śunāyiva//*

or the utter monotony of the *Sakhīsaṃvāda, Viraha* or *Āgama.*[9] But the cultured members of the audience, too, were extremely fond of *Kheuḍ.* Mahārājā Nubkissen heartily guffawed whenever he listened to these songs.[10]

The theology of the Kartābhajā sect was stated in hundreds of songs which were technically *Kavi*-songs. This fact makes it clear that the language of the *Kavi*-song could also be remarkably civilized and expressive.

The tunes used by the early *Kavi*-singers are not known. Later, owing to the patronage of men who liked classical modes, the *Kavi*-songs grew *Ustādi* or classical. But presumably the gulf between the wordy character of the *Kavi*-song and its classical tune remained unbridged. It almost disappeared after 1850. It was extremely difficult for Īśvar Gupta to find out its remnants even in 1854-1855. The thematic stereotype compelled the *Kavi*-poets to use alliterations and puns at an early stage of its development. Much of these, of course, were merely gibberish. Later the original sequences were lost in the increasing number of innovations.

IV

The *Pāncālī* was another type of song which was deeply influenced by Vaiṣṇavism. It is mentioned in BRK.[11] The mediaeval Bengali *Pāncālī* was partly sung and partly recited. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the typical *Pāncālī* had five distinct features. It was accompanied with orchestral music. It was composed on a subject related to the legends of Durgā or Kālī. The *Sakhīsaṃvāda* was the third feature. The fourth and the fifth features were the *Viraha* and *Chaḍā* (Doggerel).[12] The doggerels probably reflected the *Pāncālī's* indebtedness to *Yātrā* and *Kathakatā.* Later on the doggerels were sung.

9. *Iśvara Gupta Granthāvalī,* Vol. I, p. 167 : *"Hyād Dekh Letāi, Phāyār Jhadi Kālkukilir Gān Dhalli To Do, Delām, Khāḍ Gā".* This was the request for a *Kheḍ* song.
10. Ibid., p. 190.
11. BRK, Ch. 5, p. 265 : *"Kṣudra Gīta Bheda Cāri Citrapada Āra/ Citrakalā, Dhruvapada, Pāncālī Pracāra"//*
12. These features are described by Manomohan Basu. See *Manomohan Gītāvalī,* pp. 161-163.

The *Pāncālī* singers who achieved fame in the beginning of the nineteenth century were Gangānārāyaṇ Naskar (who had a link with the *Pakṣīra Dal* or *Party of the Birds*) and *Lakṣmīkānta* Biśvās.[13] Lakṣmīkānta was a talented singer of classical songs and an expert in quick repartee. He sang his *Pāncālī* songs in the *Tappā* style. Another important *Pāncālī* singer and composer was Thākurdās Datta (1801-1876). Seven of his *Pāncālīs* were composed on Vaiṣṇava themes.[14]

The greatest *Pāncālī* poet and singer of the nineteenth century was Dāśarathī Rāya of Burdwān (1806-1857). He established the episodic *Pāncālī* on a sound basis. He was once the paramour of a low-caste female *Kavi*-singer named Akṣayā Bāitinī or Ākā Bāi. A time came when Dāśarathī himself became the target of the obscene *Kheuḍ* of the rival *Kavi* groups. Being unable to stand the assault on his Brāhmaṇical honour, he left the party of Ākā Bāi, and formed a *Pāncālī* group in 1836. His long association with the untouchable woman produced a severe trauma which made him extremely conservative. He became a champion of conservative causes. In some *Pāncālīs* he heaped ridicule on the Bairāgīs and the Kartābhajās.[15] He thought that the Bairāgīs no longer respected the Brāhmaṇas. "They beg during the day and steal at night". But Dāśarathī was all praise for Caitanya whom he regarded as Kṛṣṇa's incarnation.[16] He composed seventy *Pāncālīs*. Thirty-nine of these are based on various Kṛṣṇa legends of the *Purāṇas* and the episodes narrated in the *Padāvalī*. Folk-lore was liberally mixed with them. Dāśarathī regarded both Rādhā and Durgā as 'daughters of the soil".[17] Delightful anachronism is an important feature of his vivid descriptions. Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa and the milkmaids are depicted as rural youth of nineteenth century Bengal. Dāśarathī's songs were mostly *Tappās* of the highest grade.[18]

13. *Iśvar Gupta Racanāvalī*, Vol. I, pp. 207-210.
14. The *Pāncālīs* were "Rāmer Deśagamana", "Pārijātaharaṇa", "Akrura Āgamana", "Dāna", "Māna", "Māthura", "Dhruvacaritra". Asitkumār Bandyopādhyāya, *Bāngālā Sāhityer Itivṛtta*, Vol. 4, p. 408.
15. *Dāśarathī Rāyer Pāṇcālī*, ed. Haripada Cakravartī, "Śākta Vaiṣṇaver Dvandva", pp. 650 f. "Kartābhajā", pp. 662 f.
16. Ibid., "Kartābhajā", p. 666 ; "Strī Puruṣer Dvandva", p. 668.
17. Ibid., "Māthur", p. 214 : "Mātir Meye".
18. Rājyeśvar Mitra, *"Bānglār Gītakār"*, p. 40.

Two interesting *Pāncālīs* of Dāśarathī describe the *Navanārī-kunjara.*[19] Once an elephant's figure was formed by Rādhā and her eight female friends. This figure, reminiscent of the wonderful feat of well-trained circus girls, is the subject of *Navanārīkunjara Pāncālīs.* Kṛṣṇa rides on this figure. The other notable *Pāncālī* composers were Brajamohan Rāya, Manomohan Basu, Kṛṣṇadhan De, Nandalāl Rāya and Rasikcandra Rāya.[20]

V

The *Dhap* songs represented a new development of the Vaiṣṇava *Kīrtana. Dhap* means something that is shapely.[21] *Dhap* was simpler than classical *Līlākīrtana.* It was episodic, and composed on the subjects of *Dāna, Māna* and *Māthura.* It did not conform to the rigid formalism of the *Kīrtana.* The singer first delivered a short, prefatory lecture, and then sang his song. The theme of the song was sung first.[22]

The *Dhapkīrtana* was the creation of Rūpcānd Adhikārī (1722-1792) of Beldāngā, Murshidābād.[23] Rūpcānd was trained to sing *Dhap* by an ascetic of Simuliā village who was probably a Bāul. Rupcānd's *Dhap* resulted in the fragmentation of the *Manoharasāhī Kīrtana.* This means that a movement against the classicism and rigid stylization of *Manoharasāhī* had become strong towards the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The *Dhap* was further developed by Aghora Dāsa, Dvārikā Dāsa, Śyāma Bāul, Rādhāmohan Bāul, and Madhusūdan Kinnara. It should also be noted that Lālan Fakir's songs on Kṛṣṇa's childhood are similar to the *Dhap* songs in respect of thematic consistency and linguistic simplicity.[24]

Madhusūdan Kinnara (1818-1867) was an inhabitant of Jessore. The title *Kinnara* was shortened to *Kān,* and Madhusūdan

19. *Dāśarathī Rāyer Pāncālī,* pp. 92-102.
20. Niranjan Cakravortī, *Unāviṃśa Satāvdīr Pāncālikar O Bānglā Sāhitya.*
21. *Saṃsad Bānglā Abhidhān,* compiled by Śailendra Biśvās, 2nd ed. 1964, p. 340.
22. Asitkumār Bandyopādhyāya, op. cit., pp. 337-353.
23. Mukhopādhyāya, *Bānglār Kīrtan O Kīrtanīyā,* pp. 119-120.
24. *Lālan Gītikā,* songs 341-373.

was known as Madhu Kān. He was a pupil of Rādhāmohan Bāul of Rākhāḍiyā village of Jessore. Later Madhu Kān went to Dāccā, where he mastered the classical modes. According to one authority, Madhu Kān was a disciple of the Gosvāmins of Khaḍadaha. But he was regarded as a Muhammadan. After his death his body was ceremonially thrown into a river.[25] Kān's *Dhap* songs were, according to Sukumār Sen, as meaningful as Madhusūdan Datta's *Vrajānganā Kāvya*[26] which signified the beginning of new Bengali poetry.

Kān wrote *Dhap* songs on *Māna, Māthura, Akrurasaṃvāda, Kurukṣetra, Prabhāsa,* and *Kalankabhanjana* episodes.[27] After him *Dhap* was sung by many professional female singers who were invariably regarded by the supercilious prudes as "whores". The notable among them were Pānnāmayī Dāsī, Bāmī Kīrtanī and Jaganmohinī Kān.[28]

VI

In pre-modern Bengal a very important form of folk entertainment was the *Kṛṣṇayātrā*. Some form of *Kṛṣṇayātrā* was popular in Navadvīpa in the sixteenth century ; at least Caitanya and his friends and disciples tried to make it popular in Navadvīpa. Vṛndāvana Dāsa wrote that the *Kṛṣṇayātrā* was no longer popular in Navadvīpa.[29] In a *Kṛṣṇayātrā* performance held in the house of Candraśekhara Ācārya, Caitanya himself played the part of Kṛṣṇa's principal queen Rukmiṇī. He grew ecstatic and marred the show.[30]

The *Kṛṣṇayātrā* was based upon the legends of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and the *Padāvalī*. Various types of *Kṛṣṇayātrā* were held in the beginning of the nineteenth century. A list of these types, mentioned by Ward, is given below in his spelling :[31]

25. Śivaratan Mitra, *Bangīya Sāhitya Sevak,* parts 15-16, pp. 626-628.
26. Sen, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 157.
27. *Bāngālīr Gān,* pp. 333-360, has a collection of 123 songs of Madhu Kān. His *Dhap Kīrtana* was published in 1907.
28. Gopeshcandra Datta, *Kṛṣṇayātrā O Nīlkantha Mukhopādhyāya,* pp. 76-77.
29. CBH, *Adikhaṇḍa,* Ch. 7, p. 49 : *Kṛṣṇayātrā Mahotsava Parva Nahi Kare/ Vivāhādi Karme Se Ānanda Kari Mare..*
30. The performance is described in CBH, *Madhyakhaṇḍa,* Ch. 18 ; See also, Sukumār Sen, *Nata Nātya Nātaka,* pp. 60-67.
31. Ward, *Account,* Vol. 2, Section XVIII, pp. 491-496.

"Manu-bhungu
"Kulunku-bhunjunu
' Pootanu-budhu
"Prulumbu-budhu
"Danu-khundu ("certain tricks of Krishnu with the milk-maids")
"Nouku-khundu
"Kaleeyu-dumunu
"Ukrooru-sumbadu
"Dhoolee-Sungbadu ("Radha's inviting Krishnu to come back to her to Brindavunu)
"Vukusooru-budhu
"Junmu-yatra
"Kungshu-budhu
"Gosthu-yatru
"Radhika-raju

Ward was hugely amused by the sharp repartee and the banter of the "Manu-bhungu". He wrote :[32] "Very frequently the Yatru is prolonged till morning. Flambeaus and other artificial lights are used. The spectators are affected with joy and grief to as great a degree as those who behold the tragedies and entertainments on the English stage.....By these Yatrus the popular tales respecting the Hindu Gods &c. become very widely circulated, and riveted on the minds of the populace, and a strong interest is excited in their minds in favour of the system respecting which their passions are thus inflamed. The scenes are often very indecent, and the whole, by exciting a kind of enthusiasm in the cause of licentiousness, produces a dreadful effect on the minds of the spectators, young and old. The entertainment's (*sic.*) which relate to the lascivious Krishnu are most popular, and draw together the greatest crowds ; while those which are taken from the histories of Ramu and Doorga excite much less of the public attention."[33]

Ward mentions three types of *Yātrās,* namely, the *Kṛṣṇayātrā,* the *Rāmayātra,* and the *Caṇḍīyātrā.* According to one authority,

32. Ward, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 492-495.
33. See also *The Calcutta Review,* XI, January-June, 1849, pp. 493-522. Almost similar opinion was held by S. K. De : *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century,* p. 408.

īRāmayātrā was older than *Kṛṣṇayātrā.*[34] The *Kṛṣṇayātrā* was also known as *Kāliyādamana Yātrā,* which is mentioned by Mukundarāma in his *Caṇḍīmangala.*[35] Scholars hold different opinions about the origin of the word, *Kālīyādamana.* Kṛṣṇa's fight with the hydra-headed monster *Kālīyā* was probably the most spectacular *Kṛṣṇayātrā.* So, all *Kṛṣṇayātrās* were known as *Kālīyādamana Yātrā.* Both *Kālīyādamana Yātrā and Caṇḍīyātrā* are mentioned in *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa.*[36] Later *Kālīyādamana Yātrā* signified a set of four *Kṛṣṇayātrās,* namely, *Yugalamilana, Kalankabhanjana, Māna,* and *Māthura.*[37] The *Caitanyayātrā,* mentioned by Jayanārāyaṇa Ghoṣāla in *Karuṇānidhanavilāsa,* was composed mostly on the subject of Caitanya's renunciation of the world. This *Yātrā* was known as *Nimāyisannyāsa.* The *Gauracandrikā* was sung as a preface to the *Kṛṣṇayātrā.* It was introduced by Paramānanda Adhikārī.[38]

The *Kṛṣṇayātrā* was a combination of *Kīrtana, Dhap, Jhumur, Pāncālī and Kathakatā.* But it is very difficult to say which of these art-forms constituted the nucleus of the *Kṛṣṇayātrā.* Like the *Pāncālī* the *Yātrā* was essentially a *Pālā,* or based on a definite episode. The *Dūtī* or Female Messenger described the situations and explained the episodic links between them like a *Kathaka.* During the *Yātrā, Jhumur, Dhap,* and parts of the relevant *Līlākīrtana* were sung by different individuals or groups of singers. In any *Kṛṣṇayātrā* three actors were more prominent than the others. They were Vyāsadeva, to whom was assigned a comic role, Nārada, and Vṛndādūtī. The role of Vṛndādūtī was pivotal. Her part was usually played by the *Adhikārī* or the Manager of the troupe. The part of Vyāsadeva was introduced by Paramānanda Adhikārī.[39]

The *Kṛṣṇayātrā,* witnessed by Ward in 1811, was probably

34. Amūlyacaraṇ Vidyābhūsaṇ, *Bhārat Saṃskṛtir Utsadhāra,* p. 735.
35. *Caṇḍīmangala* (Sāhitya Akademi ed.), pp. 170-171, verse—300 : *Nārada Gāyena Gīta Viraciyā Kālīyadamana.*
36. *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa,* p. 247, verse 20 : *Kāliyādamana Rāsa Caṇḍīyātrā Dhīra/Racila Caitanyayātrā Rase Paripūra//*
37. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, *Gauḍa-Vanga Saṃskṛiti,* p. 152.
38. Ibid., p. 152.
39. *Gauḍa-Vanga Saṃskṛiti,* pp. 152-154 ; S. K. De, *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century,* p. 409, Asitkumār Bandyopādhyāya, op. cit., pp. 452-470.

perfected by Paramānanda Adhikārī towards the end of the eighteenth century.[40] Rājendralāla Mitra, however, regarded Śiśurāma Adhikārī as the creator of the *Kṛṣṇayātrā*.[41] Śiśurāma was probably born in Bīrbhūm. The *guru*-sequence from the time of Śiśurāma to the very end of the nineteenth century was as follows :[42]

Śiśurāma Adhikārī (Bīrbhūm ?)
Paramānanda Adhikārī (1733-1823 ?)
Brothers Śrīdāma and Suvala
Premacandra
Vadana Adhikārī
Govinda Adhikārī (1798-1876 ?)
Nīlkantha Mukhopādhyāya (1841-1911) (Burdwān).

The form of *Kṛṣṇayātrā* was, however, modified by Govinda Adhikārī. He was a popular singer of *Padāvalī* songs. He infused *bhakti* into the *Yātrā* melodrama. He also eliminated the character of Vyāsadeva. He soon grew rich and became a *zamindar*. He was even admired by the great writers like Bankimcandra Cattopādhyāya and Gangācaraṇ Sarkār. Govinda Adhikārī was famous for his two *Dvandva*-songs or "Song Debates", which were composed on the subject of the comparative evaluation of the excellence of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. The first song is a debate between the crest-ornament (*Cūḍā*) of Kṛṣṇa and the foot-ornament (*Nūpūra*) of Rādhā. The *Cūḍā* harps on the merits of Kṛṣṇa. The *Nupūra* rebuts it by singing of the glories of Rādhā. The second song, sung by the male *Śuka* bird and the female *Śārī* bird is similar to it ; it is still sung by the wandering Bairāgīs.[43]

It was Nīlakantha Mukhopādhyāya who saved *Kṛṣṇayātrā* from triviality, gave it respectability, and made it popular in the towns and villages.[44] In his youth this talented singer and poet was treated like a slave by his employers. For all his great merits he

40. *Gauḍa-Vanga Saṃskṛti*, pp. 154-155.
41. *Vividhārthasaṃgraha*, 1858, Magha, p. 235.
42. Harekṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāya, "Kāliyādamana Yātrā O Nīlkantha", Śāradīya Yugāntar, B.S. 1359 (1952), p. 68.
43. The song-debate of the birds was parodied by Akṣayacandra Sarkār, *Bāngālīr Gān*, pp. 962-963.
44. Nīlkantha Mukhopādhyāya's biography has been written by Gopeshcandra Datta. See his *Kṛṣṇayātrā O Nīlkantha Mukhopādhyāya*.

was paid only Rupees Six per month. He formed his own *Yātrā*-party in 1857. Nīlkantha was a meritorious singer of *Līlākīrtana* and classical songs. His own compositions were couched in chaste and refined language, and based upon sound knowledge of the Vaiṣṇava myths. He wrote seven *Pālās,* namely, *Candālinīuddhāra, Prabhāsayajṇa, Kaṃśavadha, Yajātir Jajṇa, Māna, Māthura,* and *Kalankabhanjana.*[45] He also composed some excellent songs on the filial mood.

Another powerful composer of *Kṛṣṇayātrā* was Kṛṣṇakamal Gosvāmī (1810-1888), who belonged to the family of a Vaiṣṇava leader of the sixteenth century named Sadāśiva Kavirāj. Being a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *guru,* Kṛṣṇakamal wrote seven *Yātrās* from the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava aesthetic point of view. He made *Kṛṣṇayātrā* extremely popular in Dacca where he lived, and also in other parts of East Bengal. The *Yātrās* composed by him were *Svapnavilāsa* (1842), *Divyonmāda* (1842), *Vicitravilāsa* (1856), *Kālīyadamana, Nimāyisannyāsa, Bharatamilana,* and *Gandharvamilana. Svapnavilāsa* is a collection of songs. His best work is *Divyonmāda* which clearly shows traces of the influence of Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Lalītamādhava.*[46]

VIII

In different types of Bengali folk-songs Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are the symbols of love and passion. They are very different from the deified figures of theology and aesthetics. Both Hindu and Muhammadan folk-poets are passionately fond of them. The Bengali folk-songs on love seem to have been deeply influenced by the *Kīrtana* songs on the motif of *Viraha* or separation. But such folk-songs have no link with the purely devotional mood. They reflect the yearning of the lovers who are poor and downtrodden peasants. In the tearful tunes of these songs there is an echo of their poverty, hunger, and deprivation.

45. These *pālās* have been collected by Gopeshcandra Datta.
46. For editions of Kṛṣṇakamal's *Yātrās,* see bibliography. Nishīkānta Cattopadhyāya (1852-1910), a Brāhma scholar, wrote a thesis on Kṛṣṇakamal's works, for which he secured the Ph.D. degree from the Zurich University in 1882. Vide. Nishikānta Chattopādhyāya, *The Yātrās* or *the Popular Dramas of Bengal* (Reprint) edited with an introduction by Rāmakānta Cakravartī, Calcutta, 1976.

It has been suggested that the 'original' texture of the Bengali folk-songs has been considerably weakened by the devotional sentiment.[47] But what was the "original" Bengali folk-song? No definite answer to this question is available. The devotional sentiment is present only in the purely religious or sectarian folk-songs, like the *Bāul, Dehatattva, Murshidā,* and *Mārfati* songs. But Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā and Caitanya prominently figure even in "work-songs" like the *Sārī* and the *Jārī.*

It should be noted that *Kīrtana* was also influenced by the folk-songs. The folk influence is clearly seen in the language and concepts of the *Dhāmālī* songs of Locana Dāsa, who was the author of *Caitanyamangala,* and a disciple of the *gosvāmins* of Śrīkhaṇḍa. The erotic and the bantering spirit of the *Dhāmālī* seeped into the *Kheuḍ* of the *Kavi*-songs. In North Bengal, a type of obscene songs, known as *Kṛṣṇadhāmālī,* was sung on certain festive occasions. Then again, even the classical *Manoharasāhī* had to depend on the *Jhumur* interlude. The Vaiṣṇava leaven is clearly discernible in at least thirty types of folk-songs.[48]

Of the three hundred and seventy-nine folk-songs of Sylhet collected by Gurusadaya Datta and Nirmalendu Bhowmik in *Śrīhatter Lokasangīt,* nearly one hundred and sixty songs, composed mostly by Muslim poets, have a distinctly Vaiṣṇava leaven. Sixty of them are devotional songs. The folk-songs of Sylhet have both the easy, wavy pattern of the *Kīrtana* and the tonal dynamism of the *Sūfi*-devotionals. Jatīndramohan Bhattācārya mentions one hundred and two Muhammadan poets who were influenced by Vaiṣṇavism. But the list is obviously incomplete.[49]

Forty-three *pālās* or ballads of Mymensingh have been collected and edited by Kṣitishcandra Maulik.[50] Only one of them is a *Śrī-*

47. Hemānga Biśvās, "Lokasangīter Sankat", *Sāhityapatra,* Āsāḍa, B.S. 1377 (1970), p. 9.
48. These types of folk-songs are quoted and discussed by Āṣutoṣa Bhattācārya in *Bānglār Lokasāhitya,* Vol. 3, (published by Arūpkumār Bhattācārya, Calcutta, 1965).
49. Vide Jatīndramohan Bhattācārya, *Bānglār Vaiṣṇava Bhāvāpanna Musalmān Kavi.*
50. Kṣitishcandra Maulik, *Prācīn Pūrva Banga Gītikā,* 6 volumes. These *Pālās* were first collected and edited by Dīneshcandra Sen in *Maimansinghagītikā* (1923), and *Pūrva Banga Gītikā,* 3 Volumes (1926-1932).

kṛṣṇakīrtana, which was composed in the middle of the nineteenth century by Sulocanā, a poetess, who belonged to the untouchable Namaśūdra caste. But in many other ballads of Mymensingh there are quite definite traces of the Vaiṣṇava influence. Some examples are given below :

1. The hero of "Mahuyā" is named Nader Cānd (an appellation of Caitanya).[51]
2. The emotional content in "Śyāma Rāya" is evidently Vaiṣṇava.[52]
3. The ideology of the Vaiṣṇava *Mahājana* poets is referred to in "Pirvātāsī".[53]
4. *Cikan-Kālā* or Kṛṣṇa is referred to in "Manir Ojhā Mānjur Māo".[54]
5. In "Līlā Kanka", Kanka and Garga Muni are said to have renounced the world as ascetics of the Caitanya order.[55]
6. In Āndhā Vandhu" the sound of the flute forms the kernel of the ballad.[56]

At least ten types of folk-songs of Mymensight, such as *Bhātiyalī, Ghāntu, Ghāntu-telenā, Pauṣpārvaṇ, Patuyā, Rāsalīlā, Rādhāvāramāsyā, Sārī, Jāri,* and *Vasanta* have an identifiable Vaiṣṇava element. The *Ghāntu* and the *Ghāntu-telenā* songs of Eastern Mymensingh, Northern Tripura and Western Sylhet are partly Bengali and partly Hindī folk-songs, in which the Vaiṣṇava element is quite distinct.[57] The *Rādhāvāramāsyā* songs were possibly imported into eastern Mymensingh from northern India.[58]

51. Maulik, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 7-67.
52. Maulik, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 342-367. This *Pālā* was composed by Nitāicānd.
53. Maulik, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 169-204 : p. 190 : "*Milan Haite Vicheda Bhala Mahajane Bale*".
54. Maulik, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 387-411 : p. 401 : "*Bandhu Āmār Cikan Kāla Re, Āre Bhālā, Kāṇer Kāncā Sonā*".
55. Maulik, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 10-101 : p. 83 : Kanka is described as a devotete of Gaurānga : "*Gaurānger Purṇa Bhakta Kanda Se Sujan*" ; p. 83 : the poet describes the egalitarian principle of the *Kīrtana.*
56. Maulik, op. cit., Vol. 5, pp. 72-124.
57. Āṣutoṣa Bhattācarya, op. cit., p. 352.
58. M. S. Randhwa, *Kangra Paintings on Love,* pp. 133-146, describes *Vāramāsyā* literature in Hindi and Punjabi languages.

It has already been noted in a previous chapter that numerous *Kṛṣṇalīlā Kāvyas* were composed by the poets of Chittagong. The *Hāola* type of *Bhātialī* songs of Mymensingh and Dacca was a derivative of the Vaiṣṇava *Dhamali*.[59] The influence of the classic Hindi *Horigāna* is discernible in the *Dhāmālī* and *Holī* songs of Bengal. The legend of Caṇḍīdāsa's love for Rāmī, the washerwoman, is found in a number of *Bhātiyālī* love-songs and the songs of Sylhet. Kṛṣṇa's meeting with Rādhā on the bank of the Yamunā river is a motif of all sorts of folk-songs on the tryst of lovers. In some *Bhātiyālī* songs the *Gauranāgara* idea is used to express unfulfilled yearning.

The famous *Jhumur* song probably originated in the tribal Jhāḍakhaṇḍa region of West Bengal. The original *Jhumur* song was both a solo and a group song.[60] When it was sung in a group, it took the form of questions and answers or proposition and their explanations. The group-*Jhumur* might have been the original inspiration behind *Kavi*-rivalry. Jayanārāyaṇa Ghoṣāl described *Jhumur* as a 'a new song of Bengal'.[61] It was the song of the prevalent *Kālīyādamana Yātrā*. In the middle of the nineteenth century *Jhumur* became the folk-substitute of *Kīrtana*. *Jhumur* troupes were organized by female singers who visited all parts of Bengal. The joys and sorrows of the *Jhumur* singers form the subject-matter of Tārāśankar Bandyopādhyāya's novel, *Kavi*. One of the prominent *Jhumur* leaders of nineteenth century Bengal was Bhavānī, a woman of the Suvarṇavaṇik caste. She lived in Dāspur in the Ghātāl sub-division of Midnapur and died in 1870. She is said to have liberated *Jhumur* from obscenity.[62]

Aṣutosh Bhattācārya says that the *Bhāoyāyiyā* songs of North Bengal were absolutely free of the Vaiṣṇava influence But of the ninety-eight *Bhāoyāyiyā* songs collected by Harishcandra Pāl,[63] nineteen songs contain references to Kṛṣṇa's love. Two of these songs

59. Maulik, op. cit., Vol. I, Intro. pp. 12-15.
60. Mukhopādhyāya, *Gauḍa-Vanga Saṃskṛiti*, pp. 116-117.
61. *Karuṇānidhānavilāsa*, p. 247, verse 19 : *"Bānglār Nava Gāna Nūtana Jhumur"*.
62. *Bāngālīr Gān*, p. 1043.
63. Harishcandra Pāl (ed.) *Uttar Bāṇglār Pallīgīti, Bhaoyāyiyā Khaṇḍa*. See, Āṣutoṣa Bhattācārya's remarks in *Bānglār Loka Saṇgīta*, ed. Surescandra Chakravartī, Vol. I, Intro. p. 7.

were composed on Caitanya's renunciation of the world.[64] The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme is to be found in nine of the eighty-three *Chatkā* songs collected by the same industrious compiler.[65]

In some songs, Kṛṣṇa is described as a peasant. In a *Baul* song he is described as a carpenter.[66] In one roof-levelling song, Kṛṣṇa is simply the son of the milkman.[67] In some other songs he is a boatman.[68] Rādhā, the milkmaid, winnows paddy in Vṛndāvana.[69] The tribal Kṛṣṇa of Midnapur even asks Rādhā to prepare for him a cup of tea. He warns her that he would jump into the Jamūnā river as the tea is not mixed with milk,—a curious reason behind suicide![70]

The sports of Caitanya are described in *Patuā, Pancakalyānpatuā, Bhāoyāyiyā, Bhātialī, Jāg Sārī Aṣtak* and *Banduti* songs, as well as in the songs of the boat race.

Many *Bāul* and *Bhātiyālī* poets were influenced by the attractive *Gauranāgara* romanticism. But the *Gauranāgara* folk-songs were far more decent and sincere than some of the mediaeval songs of Narahari Sarkār and the poets of his 'branch'. The free translation of a famous *Bhātiyālī* song on the *Gauranāgara* concept is given below. The song begins with *"Gaur Rūpa Dekhiyā Haiyāchi Pāgal, Auṣadhe Āra Mānenā, Cal sajanī Jāi Go Nadīyāya."*

> I have become mad after seeing the beauty of Gaura (Caitanya). There is no medicine for me. My friend! Let us go to Nadīā (Navadvipa). Gaurānga is a dangerous man. If the thorn of his attraction once enters the flesh, it can hardly be removed.

64. Harishcandra Pāl, op. cit., pp. 105-107.
65. Harishcandra Pāl, *Uttar Bānglār Pallīgīti, Chatkā Khaṇḍa.*
66. Upendranāth Bhattācārya, *Bānglār Bāul O Bāul Gān,* song No. 645.
67. Bhattācārya, *Bānglār Lokasāhitya,* Vol. 3, songs 38, 39, p. 626.
68. Ibid., p. 607, songs 1-3 ; *Uttar Bānglār Pallīgīti, Bhāoyāyiyā Khaṇḍa.* p. 88.
69. *Bānglār Lokasāhitya,* Vol. 3, p. 633, song 1.
70. Purṇimā Sinha, "Varāhabhūmer Lokasangīta O Mārga Sangīter Vivartaner Sūtra", *Sāhitya Patra,* Āṣāḍa, B.S. 1377 (1970) pp. 44-45.

Gaurānga, the poisonous snake, has bitten me. The poison of the ordinary snake may have an antidote. But it is very difficult to live with the poison of love in my soul, because it is doubly painful.

Hither and thither I move. People spread so many canards about me. But calumny I am wearing as an ornament, mixed with sandal-paste and flowers.

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Basumatī
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Bhāratavarṣa
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CORRIGENDA

Page	*Line*	*Incorrect*	*Correct*
2	8	veterenary	veterinary
16	8	fifteenth century	twelfth century
24	10	villified	vilified
26	1	flesh blood	flesh and blood
104	3	eight	seven
121	22	Levy	Levi
278	fn. 2/Line-3	were	was